

JAY & SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK! • ATTACK OF THE CLONES

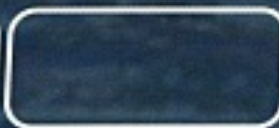
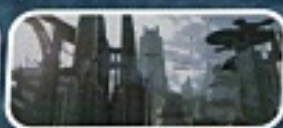
STAR WARS INSIDER

TOPDECK PRESENTS

7 NEW!
SCENES!
+ MANY EXTRAS!

EXCLUSIVE!
INTERVIEWS & PHOTOS

BEHIND THE EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE DVD



INTERVIEWS WITH AHMED BEST & ANTHONY DANIELS

Insider 56

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& Terry Coleman

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Photo by Keith Hamshire.

He doesn't say much in front
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camera he has plenty to say. In
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"Filthy humans. You bore me."

Yut ehda!
With this issue, Chris signs off as editor-in-chief of *Star Wars Insider* and *Star Wars Gamer* magazines to become the Creative Director for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* product line, but he's leaving the magazines in good hands. See below for the latest scoop.



WHO RUNS THIS SHOW?

OVERWORKED AND UNDERPAID, BUT THEY KNOW THEIR STUFF

>>> I hate goodbyes more than I hate broccoli, and I loathe broccoli.

Like my astute predecessor before me, Jeff Quick, I never really got to know the *Insider* fans. And that's a shame, because you're all such fun.

Jeff and I were brought aboard to helm *Insider* (along with its sister publication, *Star Wars Gamer*) shortly after Wizards of the Coast took over from the old gang in the swamps of Dagobah. Jeff and I were responsible for getting *Insider* back on course. Sort of like rolling out a brand new Death Star. Certainly the most fun part of our week was reading YOUR letters, from the stern and serious to the just plain freaky.

As it happens, I'm not traveling very far. It's a short trip downstairs from Deadline Hell to Roleplaying Heaven, where I've traded my small gray cube for an imperiously decadent Moff's office with more shelves than you can shake a Kowakian monkey-lizard at.

But enough about me and my luxurious office. I want to introduce you to the rest of the *Insider* staff, because I'm leaving them with our baby and you should know them well.

Scott Ricker (Art Director): Scott turns our wonderful words into a visual feast for the eyes. He's the quiet sort—voted Most Likely To Go Insane and Club Everyone To Death With a Gaffi Stick. His favorite *Star Wars* character is Greedo (who did NOT shoot Han Solo first—Special Edition be damned!).

Michael Mikaelian (Managing Editor): Mike looks after the various departments and tries to keep us on schedule. Although his

favorite *Star Wars* character is Han Solo, most of the time he feels like Chewbacca right before the Sempidal moon crushes him to a pulp.

Stacie Fiorito (Assistant Editor): Stacie actually splits her time between four mags (*Dragon*, *Dungeon*, *Gamer* and *Insider*). I don't know her favorite *Star Wars* character, but be especially nice to her: She's like the poor dianoga in the trash compactor, buried up to her eyeballs in garbage.

And finally (drumroll, please)...

Dave Gross (Editor-in-Chief): I've worked with Dave on magazines for four years. That's about three years and 354 days longer than your average Trade Federation occupation. Dave will officially assume command of *Insider* next issue (although he's helping me with the transition), and *Gamer* with Issue #7. He's bringing a lot of great ideas with him, too. His favorite *Star Wars* character is Darth Vader, and if Dave could have one Force power, it would be the ability to strangle twits from across the room. But don't let that scare you. He's as cuddly as an Ewok.

So there you have it. Treat these people well, and I promise you they'll deliver one heck of a magazine. Episode II is coming up fast, and so is this magazine's finest hour. It might be a dark time for the Republic, but it's a thrilling time for *Star Wars Insider*.

Chris Perkins

Chris Perkins, Editor-in-Chief



STAR WARS INSIDER

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Someone in the office thought it would be a fabulous idea to let a Jawa pick this month's letters. That person has been shot.

ABANDONED AS A DROID

I am excited about the coverage of Episode II, but a question has been running through my head ever since I saw Episode I. If C-3PO was Anakin's creation, and Annie wanted to complete him, why didn't he take C-3PO with him? I think he should have taken C-3PO with him instead of leaving him on Tatooine. Why did he leave C-3PO?

TRAVIS TAYLOR
York, SC

Perhaps C-3PO's destiny lies along a different path from Anakin's. We'll just have to wait until the next film to see whether their paths cross.

ALL THAT AND A BAG OF CHIPS

This letter is for 2-1B. My husband is seriously concerned about C-3PO's mental health. In all fairness, anyone who's been through what C-3PO's been through (what with the Rebellion against the evil Galactic Empire and all) would have issues. I, on the other hand, think C-3PO is totally lame and wish that Shmi would trade him in for a vacuum cleaner or something. Now granted, I am 40 and perhaps too old for him to have worked his golden magic on me (R2-D2 ain't all that and a bag of chips, either), but I still have eyes enough to recognize a babe when I see one, and 2-1 (if I may call you that), you are a BABE!



You can have my hotel room key anytime.

By the way, loved the way the photo in the last issue showed off your pecs (or whatever they are).

VICKI BOECKELMANN
St. Louis, MO

Sorry, Vicki, but we couldn't show this letter to 2-1B (his digital ego already hogs three hard drives!), but it's just too funny not to print. Besides, 2-1B is all ours!

IT'S NOT THE APOCALYPSE, YOU WEIRD CANADIAN!

I received my last issue only to find that it was about Indiana

Jones! I quickly grabbed some paper towels and sobbed for about 17 hours. I then threw the magazine against the wall in anger. At first, I was amazed to see that it didn't break into a million pieces, but then was completely shocked to see a picture of Obi-Wan on the front, wielding a lightsaber!

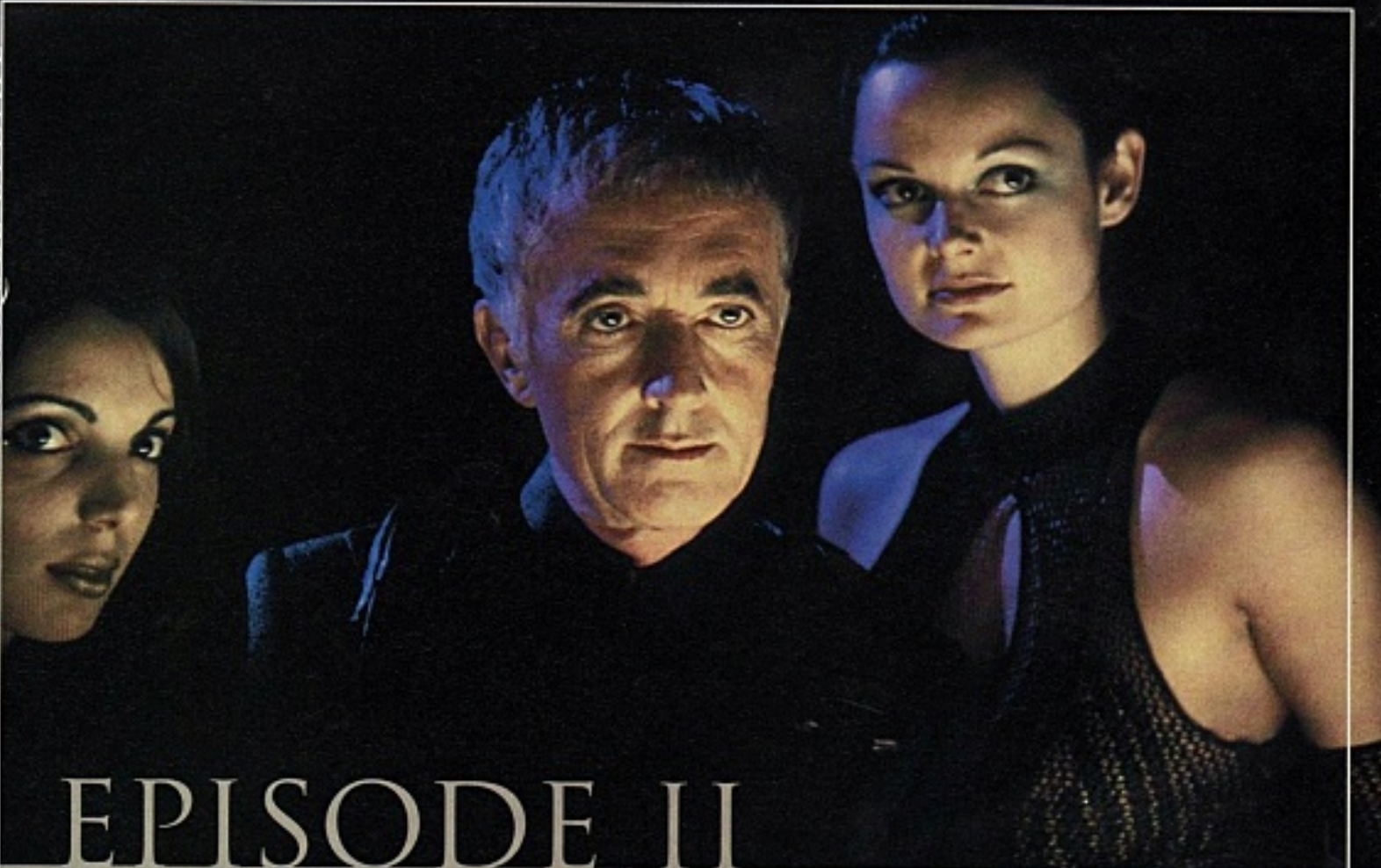
I was delighted, thinking that some higher power had transformed the magazine back into the Insider I loved, then frightened. Frightened that it was some sort of apocalyptic omen. After much hesitation, I picked it up and flipped it over. Lo and

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 80



WANNA RUMBLE?

Write to: REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail SWinsider@wizards.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. Star Wars Insider is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. This is not the address for Lucasfilm casting. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are unfortunately not possible. Sorry. All hail Palpatine!



EPISODE II PREQUEL UPDATE

CONDUCTED IN JULY, 2001

Rick, what is currently happening on Episode II?

Things are going really well. We're just moving along nicely. I think the film looks fantastic. The relationship between Anakin and Padmé is terrific, and the visual effects are superb. ILM now has about 200 effects shots done. We're shooting miniatures every day, ILM is doing some extraordinary work on Episode II. I just saw Eric Brevik's work on *Pearl Harbor*, and the work ILM did on *The Mummy Returns* and *A.I.* ILM is now doing the kind of work that I have never seen before. The stuff Eric did on *Pearl Harbor* is amazing. But on Episode II, everything is moving along at the pace it should be right now.



[ABOVE] A contemplative look at Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker) in an apartment set. Photo by Sue Adler.

BY DAN MADSEN

How many cuts do you generally do on a film like this and is it the same as it was on Episode I?

We usually do about five cuts and then you tweak it right up to the day it's released. This film is very much the same as Episode I.

When do you now foresee the first trailer for Episode II being released?

It will come out later this year—in the fall.

Up to this point, what has created the most difficulties for you on this film and are they the same as on Episode I?

[FACING, TOP] Nice to see a familiar face. A Republic Officer (Anthony Daniels) mingles with the ladies in a Coruscant nightclub. Photo by Sue Adler.

[THIS PAGE] Padmé Amidala (Natalie Portman) finds herself in one of many of Episode II's harrowing predicaments. Photo by Keith Homshere.

DATE

WITH RICK MCCALLUM
[PRODUCER]

EPISODE II PREQUEL UPDATE



[ABOVE] A young Jedi trainee gets ready for an instruction session in the Jedi Temple. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

[LEFT] Ewan McGregor reprises his role as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars: Episode II*. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

[BOTTOM] Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan Kenobi) and R4-P17 weather an indoor downpour aboard the Jedi starfighter at Fox Studios Australia. Photo by Paul Tiller.

Well, I never think of them as difficulties—I think of them as challenges. The work is always very intense. You learn from each film that you do but, then again, it doesn't really have any relevance because, at the end of the day, each film is so different. But you deal with the daily issues that are painful and complex and difficult differently with the more experience you have. There is nothing major that has caused us to stumble on this film—it is just very intense. We really do everything in our power not to have the kind of tense, uptight, crazy atmosphere where there are egos running around. That isn't the world and the environment that we've got here.

How much time do you and George spend together each day?

We usually have lunch together and then meet up at the end of the afternoon. Plus every Tuesday and Thursday we're up at ILM together, although I go to ILM every day.

What goes on in your meetings?





[Above] Taking a break between takes (from left to right), Producer Rick McCallum, Visual Effects Supervisor John Knoll, Director George Lucas, and Natalie Portman (Podracer Amidala). Photo by Keith Henshere.

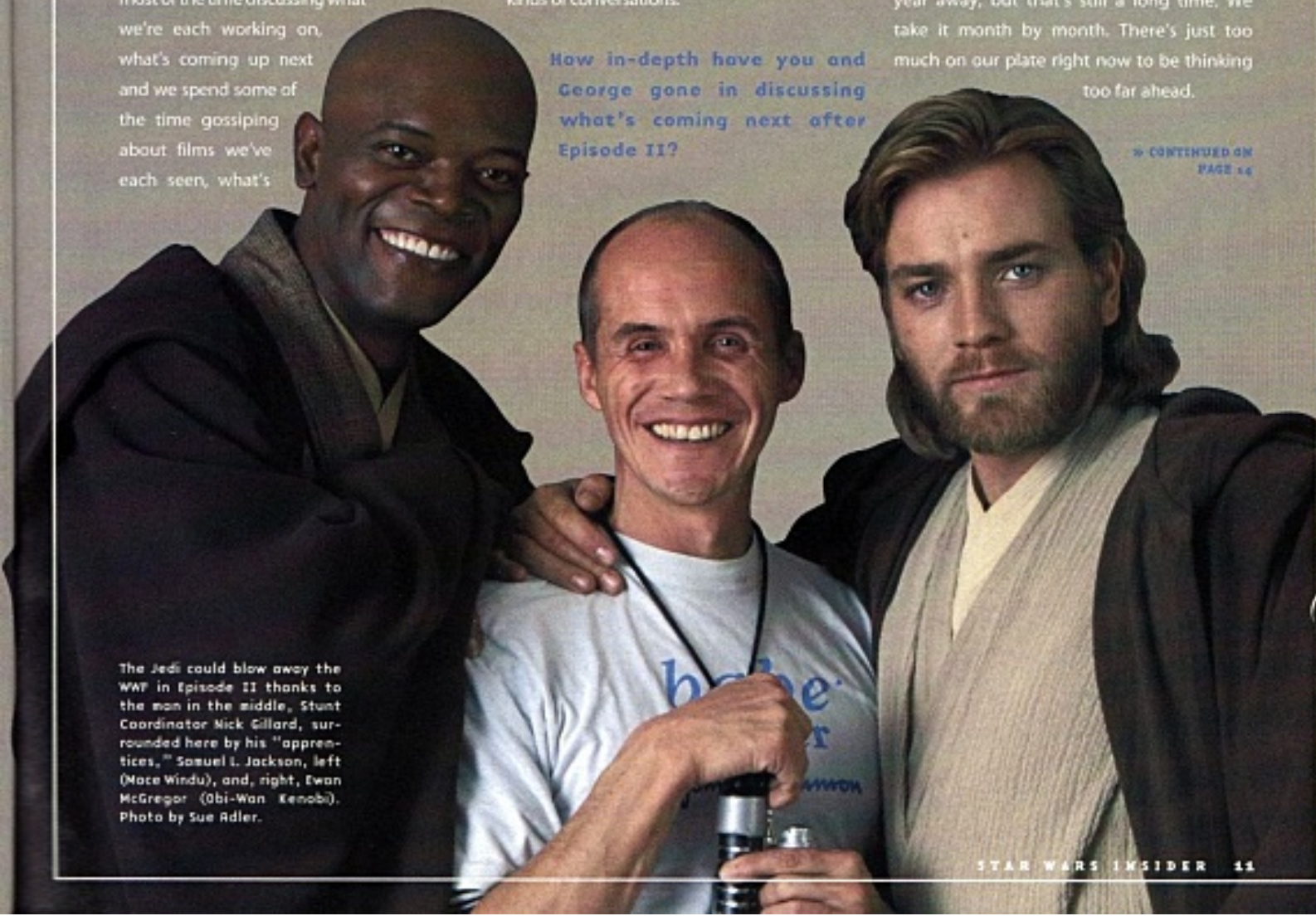
He usually updates me on the progress of the film because he's in the editing room. We spend most of the time discussing what we're each working on, what's coming up next and we spend some of the time gossiping about films we've each seen, what's

happening in our lives, what's out there that's good and what's not good. It's really just normal kinds of conversations.

How in-depth have you and George gone in discussing what's coming next after Episode II?

We haven't gotten into that yet because it's just too far off at this point. We're less than a year away, but that's still a long time. We take it month by month. There's just too much on our plate right now to be thinking too far ahead.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 44



The Jedi could blow away the WWP in Episode II thanks to the man in the middle, Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard, surrounded here by his "apprentices," Samuel L. Jackson, left (Mace Windu), and, right, Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan Kenobi). Photo by Sue Adler.



Photo by George Lucas



Animatic by Matthew Ward



Photo by Paul Tiller



Photo by Giles Westley

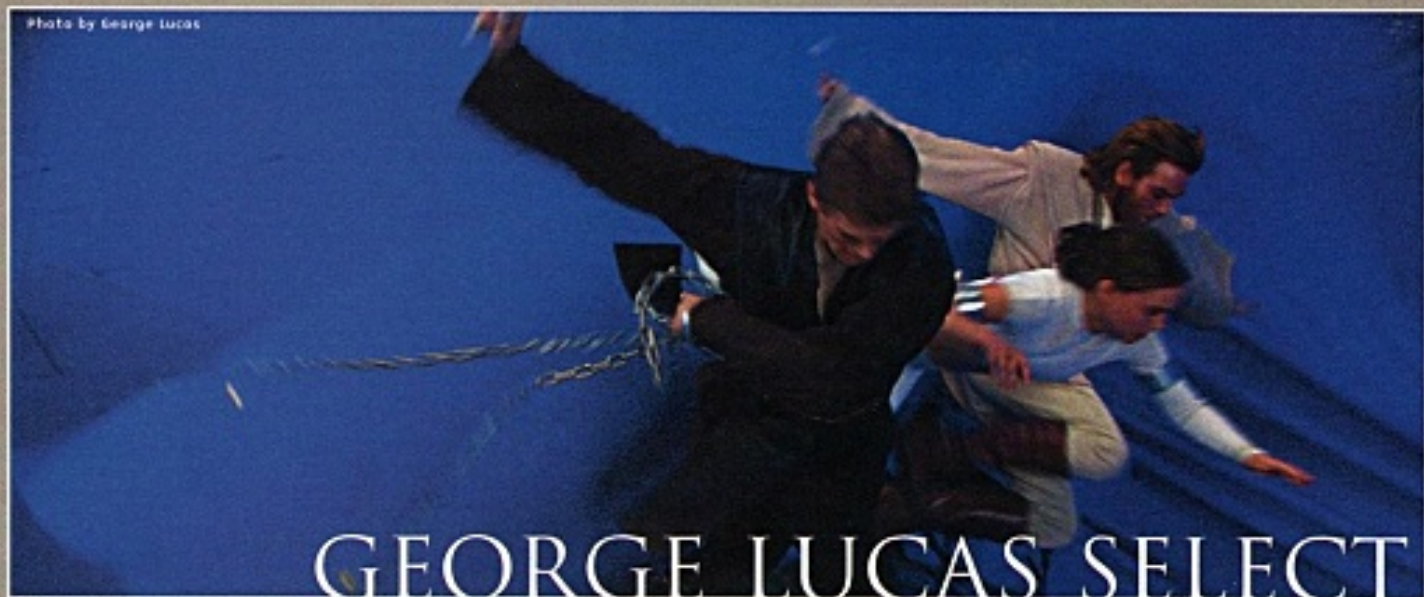


Photo by George Lucas



Photo by Lisa Tomasetti

While George Lucas is making Episode II, he wants to share some personally selected moments of the process with Star Wars fans. These photos first appeared on the official web site, www.starwars.com. They appear here in an enhanced, printed version for the first time.



GEORGE LUCAS SELECT

[IMAGES HAND-PICKED BY THE DIRECTOR]



EPISODE II PRÉQUÉL UPDATE

"THERE IS NOTHING MAJOR THAT HAS CAUSED US TO STUMBLE ON THIS FILM—IT'S JUST VERY INTENSE." —RICK MCCALLUM

[TOP] Temuera Morrison (Jango Fett) sits behind the controls of an infamous starship, the Slave I. Photo by Giles Westley.

[MIDDLE, LEFT] On a secret mission, Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) spies some strange goings-on. Photo by Sue Adler.

[BOTTOM, RIGHT] Ironically, Obi-Wan (Ewan McGregor) had just washed his Jedi starfighter. Photo by Lisa Tamasetti.

So does that mean you haven't started any early prep work for Episode III?

Not yet, but George will probably start writing a little bit of Episode III in late summer. We may also begin our art department meetings and our conceptual meetings and begin to get our wardrobe and characters down for Episode III. It will be a very gentle introduction to the third film.

Do you have any more shooting scheduled?

We may be doing some additional shooting in the fall in England and Australia—maybe two or three days and then maybe again in the spring of 2002.

How often do you check out the Internet and see what the fans out there are saying?

[ABOVE, RIGHT] Director George Lucas confers with Rose Byrne (Handmaiden Daré) and Natalie Portman (Padmé Amidala) on a public speeder bus set. Photo by Sue Adler.

[BOTTOM, RIGHT] Natalie Portman (Padmé Amidala) wears more subdued colors as she travels incognito. Photo by Sue Adler.

Not very often. However, sometimes the library will send us things—especially the really outrageous stuff! But I don't track it every day.

If you had to compare Episode II to one of the first three Star Wars films, which one would it most closely resemble?

It doesn't really resemble any of them on any level. It is unique to itself.

What has been one of the coolest things that has happened to you since coming to work for Lucasfilm?

It would have to be working with so many incredible, talented people and traveling to so many different countries all over the world. That has been the coolest part of my job. Very few jobs afford you that kind of quality experience and I have really enjoyed that part of my time here at Lucasfilm.

What do you do on your days off?

I usually get on my small boat and go out on the bay. I love sailing and power boating. It is one of my favorite things to do. I like being on the water.

What is the coolest Star Wars thing you own?

It would have to be my Rick McCallum doll that a fan sent me. It's about 12 inches tall and it's a doll of me on-location. I'm in a pair of jeans, I'm very thin and I have a full head of hair! It doesn't look anything like me which is why I like it!

That's very cool! Rick, thanks for updating us.

Oh, it's always my pleasure. 😊



STAR NEWS

FROM THE WORLD OF LUCASFILM

by Sue Weinlein Cook

WILLOW COMES TO DVD

NOVEMBER 27, 2001

**SPECIAL EDITION FEATURES
GROUNDBREAKING SPECIAL EFFECTS
& VOLUMES OF UNIQUE MATERIAL!**

Lucasfilm Ltd. and Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment announce the DVD debut of one of the most successful fantasy adventure movies of all time, *Willow*. Directed by Ron Howard and executive produced by **GEORGE LUCAS**, *Willow* numbers among the most requested DVDs on the Internet, consistently ranking in the Top 10 on DVD websites. The 1988 film stars Val Kilmer (*The Saint*), Joanne Whalley (*Breath-taking*), Jean Marsh (*Monarch*), with **WARWICK DAVIS** (Wicket the Ewok) in the title role. It was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Sound Effects Editing and Best Visual Effects.

The Special Edition DVD features exclusive material enabling fans of the movie, as well as a new generation, to experience the mystical adventure like never before. This Special Edition DVD has been THX digitally re-mastered for superior sound and picture quality and is presented in new 5.1 Dolby surround sound. Features on the disc include special commentaries, an all-new documentary showcasing *Willow*'s groundbreaking achievements

in special effects, a classic "Making of an Adventure" documentary, an effects featurette, original theatrical trailers, TV spots, a still photo gallery, and much more.

Willow is also available on VHS. Coming November 27, the DVD and VHS are priced to own at \$26.98 and \$14.98, respectively.

Based on a story by George Lucas, with a screenplay written by Bob Dolman, *Willow* is director Ron Howard's fantasy world of medieval adventure. *Willow* stars Val Kilmer as Madmartigan, a swashbuckling warrior, and Warwick Davis as the title character. In a mythical kingdom, the evil sorceress Queen Bavmorda (Jean Marsh) plots to kill all infants so that the newborn princess, Elora, will never take over the throne. But a midwife sets the baby adrift in a river, and she is rescued by Willow, a farmer in Nelwyn, a peaceful village of trolls, fairies, and little folk. Willow and Madmartigan begin a quest to deliver the baby from evil while being chased by Queen Bavmorda's daughter, Sorsha (Joanne Whalley), sent to bring the baby back to Nockmaar.





THE BRITISH
ACADEMY
OF FILM AND
TELEVISION ARTS
LOS ANGELES

British Film Academy to Salute Lucas at Britannia Awards

Director Also Invited to Join Smithsonian Committee to Select 'American Achievers'

The awards keep rolling in for director **GEORGE LUCAS**. After being recognized by the American Film Institute for his landmark *American Graffiti* (*Insider* #54), he's scheduled to receive the Stanley Kubrick Britannia Award for Excellence in Film. The award presentation takes place at the 11th annual Britannia Awards, Nov. 10 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. The awards are sponsored by the British Academy of

Film & Television Arts Los Angeles.

"We are delighted to be honoring George Lucas, who has chosen to make so many of his films in the U.K., including his 'Star Wars' and 'Indiana Jones' series," BAFTA/L.A. chairman Gary Darnall told the *Hollywood Reporter*. "He has contributed immensely to our industry as an innovative filmmaker, changing the way movies are made, seen and heard."

Lucas has directed and/or produced 10 films on location in the U.K. throughout his career, including four *Star Wars* films, the *Indiana Jones* trilogy, and the *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. He is also doing some production on *Episode II* in the U.K.

This is not Lucas' first honor for excellence in film. In 1992 he received the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' prestigious Irving G. Thalberg Award. Throughout his career, his projects have earned 17 Oscars (of 66 nominations), 12 Emmys (of 26 nominations), and six BAFTA Awards (of 17 nominations).

Last year the top British film award went to director and Lucas friend and sometimes partner **STEVEN SPIELBERG** (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Other previous winners include John Travolta, Dustin Hoffman, Bob and Harvey

> "AWARD" CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



STAR WARS EPISODE II ATTACK of the CLONES

» In case you've been living under a rock since the official announcement on August 6th, *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones* is the full title for the next *Star Wars* film, scheduled for release in 2002.

As reported on starwars.com, "Attack of the Clones joins *The Phantom Menace*, *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* as chapter titles in the six-episode Skywalker saga. It harkens back to the sense of pure fun, imagination and excitement that characterized the classic movie serials and pulp space fantasy adventures that inspired the *Star Wars* saga." 🍌

STAR SIGHTINGS

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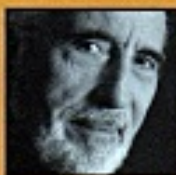
Neeson in *Asylum* • Lucas Attends Playboy Mansion Bash

Sue Weinlein Cook



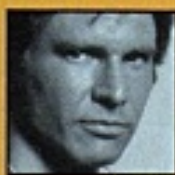
From Russian submarine XO to Irish gangland murder victim, **LIAM NEESON** (Qui-Gon Jinn) has had a full schedule of filming this year. His next movie, *Gangs of New York*—directed by Martin Scorsese (*Bringing Out the Dead*, *The Age of Innocence*) and starring Leonardo DiCaprio (*The Beach*), Cameron Diaz (*Charlie's Angels*), and Daniel Day-Lewis (*Last of the Mohicans*, *The Age of Innocence*)—is now in post-production. *Gangs*, based on a book by Herbert Asbury, depicts the gang wars between New York's Anglo-Protestant poor and the wave of Irish-Catholic immigrants in the days before the Civil War. Industrial Light and Magic is creating the digital effects for the \$90 million picture, Miramax's biggest-budget feature yet.

Last fall, prior to the start of filming, Neeson shattered his pelvis in a motorcycle accident (*Insider* #51), but a quick reworking of production schedules allowed him to remain part of the cast. The movie's December 21 opening pits *Gangs* against *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which features **CHRISTOPHER LEE** (Count Dooku) in the role of Saruman (*Insider* #51).



Following *Gangs*, Neeson will appear with his wife Natasha Richardson (*Nell*, *The Handmaid's Tale*) in the Jonathan Demme (*Philadelphia*, *Beloved*) thriller *Asylum*. According to the Ananova website, the two have long sought to work together. *Asylum*, based on Patrick McGrath's 1998 novel, tells the story of a woman whose husband becomes the director of an institution for the mentally ill, and of the inmate-murderer she befriends (Neeson). This drama for Paramount Pictures is written by Stephen King, who—in a first for the prolific novelist—adapts the work of another author for the screen....

Before agreeing to play Jack Ryan in the upcoming *The Sum of All Fears*, Ben Affleck (*Pearl Harbor*) wanted dispensation from **HARRISON FORD** (Han Solo), who played the role in two previous Tom Clancy films. As reported in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Affleck said, "I wouldn't have taken the job without talking to Harrison. I said, 'I want to make sure you're cool with me doing Jack Ryan.'"



He said, "Ben, I'm totally cool with it. I don't want to be Jack Ryan anymore. And you'll have a great time. You'll be terrific and you have my blessing." He was very sweet

and nice. I felt like I was Mark Hamill talking to Han Solo." Ford previously appeared as Ryan in *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger* after Affleck's *Pearl Harbor* costar Alac Baldwin created the role in *The Hunt for Red October*. Look for *The Sum of All Fears* in theaters next year.... Viewers of the American Film Institute's "100 Years... 100 Thrills" special on CBS in June caught Ford, as host, introducing "America's most heart-pounding movies." Ford's own *Raiders of the Lost Ark* made #10 on the list, with his *The Fugitive* at #33 and *Blade Runner* at #74. *Star Wars* came in at #27. It's interesting to note that the fan version of the list—compiled via an online poll at AFIOnline—presents a little different picture: #1 *Star Wars*, #2 *Raiders*, #3 *The Empire Strikes Back*, #6 *Return of the Jedi*, #9 *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Thanks for turning out to vote, everyone!...

GEORGE LUCAS joined publishing magnate Hugh Hefner at the Playboy Mansion earlier this year to celebrate what would have been Marilyn Monroe's 75th birthday. Hefner, a well-known Monroe fan, hosted the event in support of the documentary "Marilyn Monroe: The Final Days," from American Movie Classics and 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.



Lucas has been working with Fox on preservation techniques to restore many of Monroe's movies. He said he hoped the industry turns its efforts toward aiding the preservation of smaller films as well. "It's the independent films—the orphans—that still need saving," the director told *Variety*.

Others attending at the event included director Sydney Pollack, actor George Chakiris, and actresses Barbara Eden and Poppy Montgomery (who played Marilyn in the May CBS television TV miniseries *Blonde*)....

JEREMY BULLOCH (Boba Fett) is the first star cast in the new animated series *Nature's Guard*, produced by the Ontario-based LegendWorks Licensing. The story—which the company's president and head designer Jon Athan calls "G.I. Joe meets *Ninja Turtles* with a very *Star Wars* epic story"—revolves around a civil war on the planet Forestia between Nature's Senate and the Spidersect Empire. Athan said he met Bulloch at a convention and was excited to hear of the actor's interest in the project. "We instantly on the spot cast him as one of the characters," Athan said. Bulloch will be voicing Longtail, an old and wise yet roguish gray squirrel-soldier. "You could think of him as Han Solo meets Qui-Gon Jinn," he



said. Athan also hopes to attract other *Star Wars* actors to the project, which is still in development. For more details on these furry freedom fighters, visit www.naturesguard.com. Bulloch also is engaged in talks with LightWorX to appear in an *Advanced Warriors* interactive online plot as a mage named Max with a mysterious past. Filming was set to take place this summer in England....

The Australian edition of *For Him Magazine* ranked **NATALIE PORTMAN** (Padmé Amidala) at #15 in its "Top 100 Sexiest Women in the World" feature. The Queen of Naboo managed to nab only the #75 place in the American edition and #84 in the U.K. version. Along with her listing, the magazine featured comments from the actress regarding her current studies at Harvard University and her interest in psychology as a career field that may even rival acting....

British fans can catch **DENIS LAWSON** (Wedge Antilles) starring as a Glasgow detective on the new BBC police series *The Fabulous Bagel Boys*. Lawson plays a Jewish cop whose family runs a kosher delicatessen on the show, which premiered this spring in the U.K. Reportedly, the debut episode even featured a small *Star Wars* homage when another character referred to Lawson's as "Rabbi Wan Kenobi"....



The buzz around Hollywood is that award-winning director and screenwriter M. Night Shyamalan (*Unbreakable*, *The Sixth Sense*) will not pen the new *Indiana Jones* film. Though there reportedly were talks with him about the job, it's not going to happen. Now reports are that *Traffic* screenwriter Stephen Gaghan may get the nod instead. On a related front, *Variety* reports that *The Empire Strikes Back* writer Lawrence Kasdan (*The Big Chill*), is set to direct *Dreamcatcher*, based on a Stephen King story....



Perennial back-pain sufferer **DAVID PROWSE** (Darth Vader) was back in the hospital again after losing the use of his legs. In February he suffered an attack of chronic arthritis that sent him to the hospital (*Insider* #54), but this latest illness is diagnosed as an abscess at the base of the spine. He is out of the hospital now and fully recovering with the help of a back brace, and he expressed thanks to all the fans who sent him good wishes while he was hospitalized. ☺

Weinstein, Anthony Hopkins, Martin Scorsese, Peter Ustinov, Michael Caine, and Albert "Cubby" Broccoli.

Ewan to Trade Lightsaber for Mike?

It's nice to know that if the job of safeguarding the galaxy ever goes bust, you can always fall back on a career as a musician. Fans raised eyebrows when **EWAN MCGREGOR** (Obi-Wan Kenobi) capably crooned Elton John's "Your Song" and other numbers in his musical film *Moulin Rouge*.

"Elton was on the set the day Ewan sung, and he couldn't believe it," said *Moulin Rouge* director Baz Luhrmann in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "Elton was like, 'This guy sings this song better than I sing it.'"

The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, where costar Nicole Kidman also praised his vocals. "Ewan had to sing me Elton John's 'Your Song' about six hundred times," she told the World Entertainment News Network. "But every time [I hear it] it still evokes an immediate emotional adoration of him. When he would sing to me it was like magic."

McGregor said he'd consider recording other songs as well. "I'm not planning to cut an album or anything, but I'd never done much singing before, and I really enjoyed the opportunity," he told the WENN. "Film is often a long, laborious way to tell a story, and songs are quick and efficient, so it's quite satisfying on many levels. We had four months of rehearsals, so we could get really comfortable with the idea of singing. It got to the point where



photo © Twentieth Century Fox

you didn't even think about it before you broke into song."

Will Obi-Wan turn to the pop side of the Force? Always in motion is the future....

While *Moulin Rouge* turned heads with its blend of 19th-century settings and 20th-century music, Ewan continued filming the Ridley Scott thriller *Black Hawk Down* in Morocco. His wife and daughter, who usually join him on his shoots, have stayed away from this one; the Ananova website reported that the actor found the vivid violence in the movie, which revolves around a Somali kidnap mission, too violent for his young daughter. The McGregors are expecting their second child in October.

The actor's next project will be an adaptation of a 1954 novel called *Young Adam*. The \$6 million film, directed by David McKenzie



photo © Twentieth Century Fox

(*Scrooge: A Christmas Carol*), depicts the life of Scottish writer Alexander Trochi. Reports are also circulating McGregor will appear opposite Renee Zellweger (*Bridget Jones's Diary*) in the World War II comedy-drama *Knickers*. He plays a sales executive who becomes the love interest of a reluctant German spy and lingerie salesperson, played by Zellweger. According to the Ananova website, director John McKay (*Fellowship of the Ring* sound mixer) begins filming next year in the U.K.

Legal Bottle Heats up over Ford-Neeson Cold War Film

Shooting wrapped early this summer on the Cold War submarine thriller *K-19: The Widowmaker*, starring **HARRISON FORD** (Han Solo) and **LIAM NEESON** (Qui-Gon Jinn). (See *Insider* #52.) The film, directed by Kathryn Bigelow (*Strange Days*, *Point Break*), is based on the true story of a 1961 disaster aboard Russia's first nuclear ballistic submarine. However, the final days of shooting in Halifax, Nova Scotia,

came under a cloud when a lawsuit against the \$80 million production was upheld by a Los Angeles Superior Court.

The lawsuit, brought by writer/producer Inna Gotman against Intermedia Films International earlier this year, claims that the film's producers stole her claims to the story and interfered with her attempts to contact its living subjects. During the final days of shooting this spring, Judge Alan G. Buckner announced its decision not to throw out the suit.

Gotman alleged that she brought the idea for a film about the nuclear accident to Intermedia in 1999 and was told to continue her work on the project. She later discovered that the company had proceeded with a film about the incident without her.

Gotman said she had received the exclusive rights to the life stories of 13 surviving members of the sub's crew in 1994, and that Intermedia's independent claim to these rights is based on

» "K-19" CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



COMLINK

» WELCOME TO "COMMUNITY LINK," OR "COMLINK" FOR SHORT. SEE HOW YOUR FELLOW EARTHLINGS EXPERIENCE AND LIVE THE STAR WARS PHENOMENON!

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Walt Disney World proves yet again that it is a magical place, strong with the Force. Even forest fires could not discourage Star Wars fans from attending the second annual Star Wars Weekends celebration at the park this past May. As fires burned and lit the night sky in the distance, thousands turned up over four weekends to meet their favorite Star Wars celebrities and join in the Force-filled excitement of the Star Wars experience.

Among the stars in attendance were classic trilogy faves Kenny Baker (R2-D2), Carrie Fisher (Leia), Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), Jeremy

STAR WARS WEEKENDS

real-life faces to familiar and beloved characters. For actors like Warwick Davis, who played an Ewok in *Return of the Jedi*, the experience is reminiscent of theater insofar as it enables actors to make connections with the fans. "The movie-making process by its nature separates actors

from their audience. A movie actor can't see the faces of his audience and can't gauge the audience's reaction during a performance." Events such as Star Wars Weekends allow the actors to meet their fans face-to-face, an opportunity for which most stars are grateful. "There's such warmth among the fans," noted Jeremy Bulloch,

"and especially—at least for me—the older fans who saw the original trilogy when they were young. To be recognized and loved for what amounted to very little work on my part is nice."

In addition to the motorcade and star-gazing, this past Star Wars Weekends Celebration



▲ Warwick Davis (Wicket the Ewok) took a break from filming *Harry Potter* and flew a billion miles to sign autographs for the fans.

Bulloch (Boba Fett), Warwick Davis (Wicket), and Phil Brown (Uncle Owen). The stars took time to set their handprints in concrete, sign autographs, and share stories of their Star Wars experiences on stage with the fans. Accompanying the star-studded motorcade were dozens of costumed characters including the Emperor (escorted by Royal Guards), Darth Vader, Boba Fett, Tusken Raiders, Jawas, and Imperial stormtroopers.

Disney-MGM Studios spearheaded the four-weekend event, assembling an impressive team of stars. "It's a lot of work," commented Jeremy Bulloch. "But everyone is so pleasant. The Disney people. The fans. Everyone is so generous and gracious. It's all very flattering and tiring and fun." For some younger fans, it was a chance to put



▲ "Can I keep him?"



▲ "Why, he's our new manager. We call him our Dark Lord of the Bith."



▲ Battle-ready stormtroopers escorted the motorcade transporting such superstars as Carrie Fisher (Leia Organa).



▲ Kenny Baker (R2-D2) and Doug Chiang (Design Director for Episode II) were among the special Star Wars guests who left their mark at Walt Disney World.



▲ "Crushed by a moon, you say? Fine, whatever. I still get to keep the hat, right?"



▲ The long-lost cousins of Jay and Silent Bob pose for the camera.



▲ Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca) and Carrie Fisher (Leia Organa) play in the mud. A wary stormtrooper (far right) guards the entrance to the park.



gave visitors several opportunities to partake in the greater *Star Wars* celebration:

Wookiees, Jawas, and Ewoks, Oh My!—You literally couldn't swing a gaffi stick without hitting a costumed luminary from the *Star Wars* universe! From Queen Amidala and Darth Maul to Chewbacca and Greedo, the entire park was crawling with friendly, fuzzy, and fearsome aliens! Stormtroopers were out in force (no pun intended). There were even a few Canadians wandering about, or so we were told. ...

Instant Amidalas and Mini Mauls!—Fans could have their faces painted like Maul and Amidala and pose for pictures with their film screen counterparts.

Star Tour to Endor!—An inept droid pilot takes you and your fellow passengers on a rollicking simulation shuttle ride across the galaxy. At one point, you fly out of hyperspace right into the proverbial frying pan, diving headlong into a classic altercation between the Empire and the Rebellion. Assuming your droid pilot can dodge TIE fighters and avoid smashing into the Death Star, you might just reach Endor's moon in one piece!

Galactic Games!—A video starcade of electronic games and *Star Wars* trivia contests challenged both casual and die-hard fans.



▲ "Yubub! That's twok for 'show me your park pass, laserbrain.'"



▲ "Your powers are strong, little one. Join me, and together we shall rule the Second Grade!"



▲ "Okay, on switch...on switch..."



▲ "Ack! This sun is killing me! Next time, my crimson toadies, you will wear the black."



▲ A cavalcade of new Jedi Padawans blaze a trail for Darth Vader and a troop of his finest stormtroopers.

Behind the Force!—Lucasfilm presented a behind-the-scenes look at the four *Star Wars* movies, and even managed to drop a few hints about what fans can expect in Episode II. Hint: Senator Palpatine is more than he seems.

Hyperspace Hoopla!—Never mind the smoky haze. Nothing could stop this street party under the stars! All that singing and dancing—and weren't those Bith musicians something?

Obi-Wanna-Be!—Kids could take some time out of their busy days to train with a Jedi Master and become Padawans. The

» "WEEKENDS" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23



▲ Kenny Baker (R2-D2) admires his reflection in Vader's helmet...before signing it for a fan.

final challenge: A lightsaber duel against Darth Vader himself! Thanks in part to his menacing appearance and height advantage, Vader was able to withstand the steady barrage of little green lightsabers, but in the end—as in the films—he finally gave in to the light side of the Force.

Tatooine Traders—Fans could visit a store featuring event-exclusive trading pins, action figures, commemorative lithographs, costumes, masks, T-shirts, and other limited-edition items.

The Star Wars Weekends celebration in 2002 promises to be even more thrilling, particularly with the release of *Star Wars Episode II*. Expect to



▲ Phil Brown (Owen Lars) and Mike Quinn (Star Wars character puppeteer) were the final guests of the four-weekend event this past May.

see Episode II stars and events, plus your favorite classic trilogy characters. Preparations for next year's event are already underway, so plan your vacation now! *Insider* will keep you posted as the news develops.

For updates on next year's galactic celebration, check out www.disneyworld.com. ☺

The staff of *Star Wars Insider* would like to extend special thanks to Gary Buchanan at Disney for his hospitality, generosity, and down-to-earth approachability.



▲ "Autograph, huh? I'll give you an autograph..." ► "Would you like to buy this little boy? Heck, I'll throw in the cap for free..."

» "K-19" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

forged documents. She added that Intermedia began to interfere with her relationship with the film's subjects.

For its part, Intermedia claims in a countersuit that Gotman obstructed the production by informing crew members they could go to jail for working on the project and by jeopardizing Intermedia's relationship with other parties as well.

In *K-19: The Widowmaker*, Ford stars as the heroic captain Nikolai Zateyev, who remained with his crew aboard the vessel despite exposure to deadly radiation after a chain reaction threatened to

overheat the reactor and launch the sub's missiles against the United States. Neeson portrays Zateyev's adversary and second-in-command, Officer Yenin.

Intermedia's attorney had asked that the case be dismissed because it was filed in state court when its proper jurisdiction was federal court, as the claims fall under the federal Copyright Act.

While the legal battle continues, National Geographic Television announced its plans to spotlight *K-19: The Widowmaker* in a "National Geographic Beyond the Movie" documentary. The program draws upon the resources of

the National Geographic Society—including its maps, print publications, and photography archives—to complement historical feature films and offer more background on the events they depict. The first installment of this series

focused on this spring's blockbuster *Pearl Harbor*.

No release date for *K-19: The Widowmaker* had been announced at press time. It is to be distributed in the United States by New Regency and Fox. ☺



» You'll find *Star Wars* fans in the most unexpected places—even on the shelves of your local record store. Check out the cover of rock band Weezer's new *Green Album*; lead singer Rivers Cuomo's guitar boasts a bunch of *Star Wars* stickers, including R2-D2, Chewbacca, C-3PO, and Darth Vader. Meanwhile, Dougie Payne from the British group Travis told *Worldpop.com* that music has a personal power for good. "I think music's about energy and it's a positive energy in the face of this giant monolith of negativity," he said. "It's like the X-Wing going into the Death Star in *Star Wars*... that's what music's like."

STAR WARS

THE PHANTOM MENACE

BEHIND THE EPISODE I

THE PHANTOM MENACE

DVD

U.S. RELEASE—OCTOBER 16, 2001



BY RON MAGID, TED A. BOHUS & TERRY COLEMAN

ANAKIN'S SCUFFLE WITH GREEDO CUT SCENE NO. 6



The fight spectacle over, Wold (Warwick Davis) leaps from his perch, leaving a young Rodian named Greedo (Oliver Wolpole) to contemplate. Photo by Keith Homshere.

SOMETHING FOR THE FANS

AN INTERVIEW WITH JIM WARD,
LUCASFILM'S VICE-PRESIDENT OF MARKETING

By Ron Magid

For the past few years, Jim Ward, Lucasfilm's Vice President of Marketing, has been striving to produce a DVD of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* as spectacular and true to the cinematic experience as possible. Episode I marks Lucasfilm's first foray into the uncharted realm of the DVD format, and George Lucas' mandate was to make as impressive a disk as possible. But it takes time to insure that level of quality, and so the Episode I DVD has become the most eagerly awaited disk of the decade.

RM: Why has the release of this DVD taken so long?

JW: We've been working on it for a long time. When Episode I was done, George immediately went to work on Episode II to keep that on track, but we were already talking about a DVD at that time. What was important to all of us was to not just put out a vanilla version and slap the film on DVD just to get it out there. As you know, our core fans are everything to us and we wanted to make sure that when we did go out with something—and we knew it would be our first DVD as well—that we really wanted to put something out there that the fans would value, rather than just simply putting the film on DVD.

RM: So the extras you wanted to see on the DVD delayed the release?

JW: Yes, it took a long time to put together primarily because George felt strongly about actually finishing seven basic scenes that he'd shot [for Episode I], which meant hiring artists and designers, then going to

OIE BOIE! IT'S FINALLY HERE!

Okay, okay, you've waited long enough. On October 16, Lucasfilm and Twentieth Century Fox release the coveted *Star Wars Episode I* DVD, more than two years after *The Phantom Menace* exploded onto theater screens. Now you can relive the glorious cinematic experience on your own TV, and boy-howdy, fans who are intrigued by what didn't make it into the original theatrical release will have something to talk about. What scenes were cut? What dialogue was trimmed? What characters were found lying on the cutting room floor? How many treats and Easter eggs can Lucasfilm pack onto their first-ever *Star Wars* DVD?

In this issue, *Insider* talks with Jim Ward, Vice President of Marketing at Lucasfilm, about the DVD and reasons behind making *Star Wars* fans wait so long. We also chat with two of the pioneers at ILM who had a hand in restoring the "lost scenes" and Jon Shenk, the man behind the Episode I documentary—one of the many yummy treats on the DVD. And finally, we have pictures—lots of pictures. So enjoy!





ILM and having them create all the digital characters and put those scenes together for us. That took a long time to do.

RM: So there's actually footage we've never seen before on the DVD?

JW: We created 20 minutes of new footage, which isn't incorporated in the film. There are seven deleted—what we are calling "deleted"—scenes, but they are really scenes created specifically for this DVD.

RM: And since so much of Episode I involved visual effects, any scenes that were cut would have to have new effects elements created as well.

JW: Exactly. When you shoot a regular movie, you've got two actors at a table and they're talking, and if you cut it out of the movie, you can pick it up off the editing room floor and stick it on the DVD as is. But nothing like that exists in the *Star Wars* world because much of the film is shot against bluescreen, which is later replaced with ILM's effects. So you may have a couple of actors shot against bluescreen, but that's meaningless—you can't just stick that on a DVD, because the backgrounds aren't there and half the characters aren't there because they're digital. So George went back and fully realized these scenes. They are really fun.

RM: Besides the additional scenes, what else is unique about this DVD?

JW: First of all, the film itself. We took great pains to involve THX in every step of the process from the compression to the emulation and the authoring of this DVD. It is unprecedented how involved THX has been, and because of the extra attention, I think our fans are just going to experience a whole new dimension of this film.

Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd) and a air taxi driver on a platform above the city-planet of Coruscant. Photos by Kieth Hamshire.



Then we have an hour-long documentary film called "The Beginning." This is not your typical "Making of..." puff-piece, where the studios just slap recycled stuff on the disc. We had hired a documentary crew back in 1995 to document every step of the production process and at the end, we had over 600 hours of "behind the scenes" footage. So we brought back Jon Shenk, the guy who shot that footage, and I worked with him putting together an hour-long documentary film that really gives you a "fly on the wall—you are there" viewpoint of the creative process at Lucasfilm and ILM, which I know for a fact no one has ever seen before on a DVD.

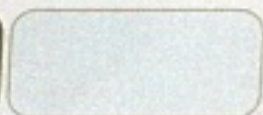
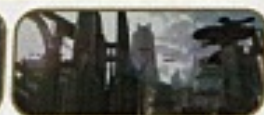
There are no talking heads, no narration, no voice-overs; it's just for an hour, you are there every step along the way with the actual people who are involved in this film. I think it is a step forward in terms of supplementary materials on DVD.

RM: It's amazing that George Lucas allowed Jon Shenk to follow the making of Episode I for over two years.

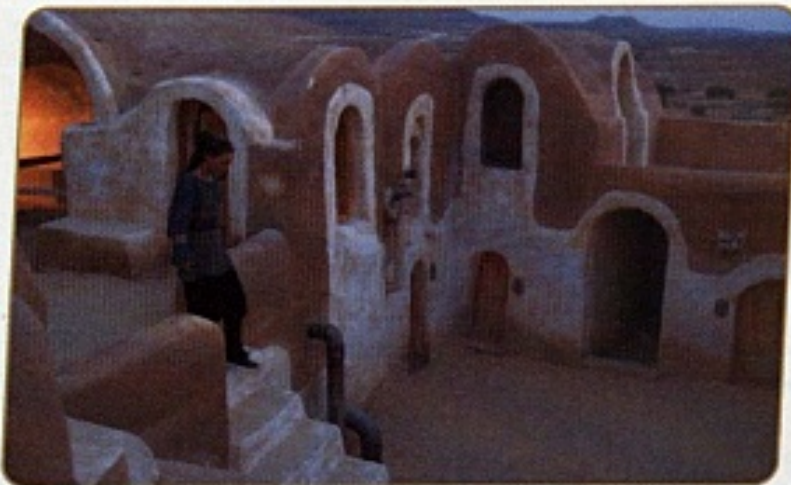
JW: Jon had unprecedented access because George really wanted that to happen. Not so much to make a documentary film as for archival reasons—to be able to resource what happened in the future. George very much believes in that. But we also had the benefit of being able



AIR TAXI CUT SCENE NO. 4



DAWN BEFORE THE RACE CUT SCENE NO. 5



Padmé Amidala (Natalie Portman) rises early, and is treated to a Tatooine sunrise, and speaks with Anakin before the Boonta Eve podrace.

to dive back into that footage and put together a great piece that is really a refreshing look at filmmaking and certainly a great look at Lucasfilm and ILM. Also, by popular demand, we are putting on the disc the twelve-part award-winning "Lynne's Diary" documentaries that were on the web and five featurettes we did for the launch of the film.

RM: Will there be any audio commentary on the making of Episode I?

JW: Yes. We've never before heard George Lucas walk through a film that he's made, but for this DVD, we have the first ever commentary by George and Rick McCallum and all of the ILM crew that plays along with the film. I think that's going to be unbelievably valuable, and our fans are going to love these great insights that they've never heard before.

RM: Was it hard to convince George to participate?

JW: No. George is fully behind the technology, totally into the DVD. He's been involved every step of the way, and I think he felt that the DVD was the medium where he could do a lot of things: like the completion of the deleted scenes and certainly the commentary.

RM: Are there any other extras on the DVD?

JW: Well, the list doesn't stop there. For all the fans who think, "Gee, there probably isn't that much more new to see in terms of stills because you probably used them all in the production materials," believe me there are many, many more. We have a whole new Still Photo Gallery of never-before-seen photos. We also did a very unique international print campaign that a lot of people never saw, so we have all of our international posters on the disc. Then we take two sequences from original storyboards to animatics to film sequences: One is the underwater sequence, and the other is Lap One of the Podrace. Basically, your TV screen will show three different screens side-by-side. One will be the storyboard, one will be the pre-visualization computer work that David Dozoretz did, and then the final scene as it appeared in the movie. You'll see all three together and how close—or different—each step of that process was. Also, using your DVD remote, you will be able to pick which of those you want to focus on, so you can then tighten in on each one of those three different screens and look at them full-frame. So that's a wonderful feature as well.

RM: This DVD sounds like a tremendous tool for filmmakers.

JW: I think so, absolutely. It is a two DVD set chock full of over six hours of value-added materials. So this is really a reference quality DVD. And, for those who have DVD-ROM capability, there will be a link directly to our website for special things that we are going to be doing long term, which can only be accessed by people who have the DVD.

RM: At one point George Lucas said that he didn't think that he was ever going to put Episode I on DVD because the technology wasn't there. What happened to change his mind?

JW: I'm not quite sure he stated that he would never do it because the technology wasn't there. I think the issue was that the technology was





changing, and he wasn't going to do it until the technology got to a level where he felt comfortable in terms of the quality of the film. I think, given the dramatic evolution of the DVD market, it was time to do it. What we wanted to do was first and foremost put the film on a DVD and have the film look the best it possibly could for the fans. And then also make it worth their wait by putting on the best possible materials that could really educate them and have them understand better the process of filmmaking itself and the whole world of *Star Wars*. It has been a blast doing that. 🍌

65 MINUTES

AN INTERVIEW WITH JON SHENK,
MAKER OF THE *STAR WARS* EPISODE I DOCUMENTARY

By Ron Magid

In late 1994, before George Lucas even started writing the script for *Star Wars* Episode I, he initiated a video record of what would prove to be one of the most arduous, unusual and groundbreaking projects in cinematic history. Almost a year later, Lucas' people found Jon Shenk, a graduate with a Master's degree from Stanford University's documentary film program, and assigned him the task of collating the nearly 100 hours of behind the scenes material that had been shot so far. Little did Shenk realize how those endless cassettes—ultimately some 600 hours beginning with the writing of Episode I and spanning its pre-production, shooting, reshooting and effects, culminating with the writing of Episode II—would dramatically change his life.

RM: How did someone like yourself, with no feature documentaries under your belt, get to create the definitive documentary on the making of *Star Wars* Episode I?

Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd) gives some of the proceeds from his sold podracer to long-time friend Jira (Margaret Townner). Photo by Keith Hanshere.

JS: It was completely random, really! Way back in late 1994, George Lucas told [Lucasfilm Director of Communications] Lynne Hale and [Episode I producer] Rick McCallum, "I'm starting this incredibly long, arduous process that will take 4 or 5 years, and it's going to be interesting and intense and we will probably learn a lot of things we don't know right now, and I want to document everything." And so the day George started writing the script, Lynne and Rick hired a crew to film him literally putting pencil to pad for the first time. Then Lynne and Rick would have crews come in here and there over the next year or so, but most of the footage was shot by whoever was available. Post production head Mike Blanchard, Art Department coordinator Jill Jerkowitz, and Lynne would pick up a high-8 or DV camera and shoot Art Department meetings and so on. By late 1996, they had probably shot about a hundred hours of footage, and eventually George turned to Lynne and said, "We need to get this stuff organized." He's a filmmaker—he knows that if you create tons of footage, unless it's organized, it's worthless.

RM: So how did they find you?

JS: Lynne and Jill turned to each other and said, "We need somebody who knows something about documentaries to figure this thing out, because it has become too much of a beast for us to handle." Jill had



FAREWELL TO JIRA
CUT SCENE NO. 7



THE WATERFALL
CUT SCENE NO. 3

Surrounded by bluescreen never filled in until the DVD release, Liam Neeson (Qui-Gon Jinn) fires on imaginary grappling hook that will lead him to safety. Photo by Keith Homshere.

for a potential documentary," so I just started shooting with a finished documentary in mind. That's how I began.

RM: Meanwhile, you didn't just file footage away.

JS: No, I made a series of short web docs for the Episode I website called Lynne's Diaries, which contained footage of George writing and interviews Lynne did with George about how the script was going and so on. That was always in addition to everything else I was doing. My job was to shoot and log and organize. It wasn't until much later that we actually started talking about doing a documentary with the footage.

RM: Did you start shaping the documentary from the outset, or did you let events unfold and dictate the story?

JS: There are a million different kinds of documentaries, but this one had an inherently interesting storyline with a 'railroad track' sort of chronology that pretty much was the backbone of the film. I love Cinema Verité documentaries, although they're actually the hardest to do, because you have to gather all the pieces for the film from the scenes you shoot. You are not going to rely on narration, you are not going to rely on interviews, so it makes the job almost like part detective, part cameraman, part storyteller. There is a constant hustling to be in the right place at the right time. So that was my idea and I thought that in doing so, I would get enough footage to take care off whatever else Lucasfilm wanted—pretty pictures of the set and so on. But I would also have these other scenes that would be a privileged view into this story that, more and more as we moved toward production, seemed to be very exciting to the world.

RM: You really captured the evolution of a whole new type of movie, because George made Episode I, then remade it again and again, which must have created huge challenges in terms of structuring your story.

gone to Stanford, so she called a professor of mine and asked for a recommendation for an all-around documentary person—kind of a Jack-of-all-trades who could shoot and do some editing. Mine was one of the names that was given to Jill. I was actually at the dentist when Jill called! I was honored and tickled to go talk to [Lucasfilm] about it. I never thought that they would hire somebody with so little experience to do such a thing. In fact, I think that was what they were looking for. Rick has always had a philosophy of hiring people who are not necessarily fully seasoned individuals, but who show promise and make up for that by being gung-ho and full of energy.

RM: Someone who hasn't yet been constrained by the "rules," who can think outside the box.

JS: They didn't say that to me; they just wanted somebody who would take the job seriously and take the pressure off them. The first job was kind of mundane: figuring out a way to organize this 100 hours of footage. But they also told me, "Once a week, you will shoot Art Department meetings with George and his designers." It was exciting because immediately I began thinking as a documentary filmmaker. Even though they didn't necessarily see this as a feature-length documentary, the thought I had right away was, "Oh my god, this is a great possibility





JS: Yes. George's whole thing is: There is no real line anymore between planning, viewing and editing. It is all one thing. By the time I became involved, there were already animatics of Podracing and moving images of proto-Jar Jar Binks. It was kind of a weird way of making a movie; it was all sort of happening at once, which meant there were things going on to shoot and to follow. There is a great scene of Ben Burtt shooting an early Jar Jar puppet, and there's George meeting with ILM for the first time laying out all the storyboards and having a conversation about whether something is possible or not. And George is telling them he is going to push them as much as he did on the last one. That was all very heady stuff—it felt so exciting just to be a fly on the wall.

RM: How did you approach telling the story of making Episode I?

JS: I knew as I was shooting it when I'd get scenes that were good. When I stumbled into Ewan McGregor getting his hair cut and George was talking about what the character's going to be like, and what the haircut means—when you have a juicy scene like that, you walk out knowing: Okay that's probably going to be in the documentary. By the time I shot 2 years on this thing, I knew in my back pocket that I had twenty scenes that were for sure going to be in the movie.

RM: Did they all end up in the documentary?

JS: No. There are some scenes that you inevitably have to cut in any movie. Unfortunately, a lot of scenes of some of the younger people who were fans that grew up on *Star Wars* and now were working on Episode I, but who weren't necessarily the heads of departments, had to go just due to running time. There were various ideas along the way—like maybe there would be 3 different hours: one about pre-production, one about production and one about post-production. But the documentary's only 65 minutes long, so there was a lot of stuff that had to go.

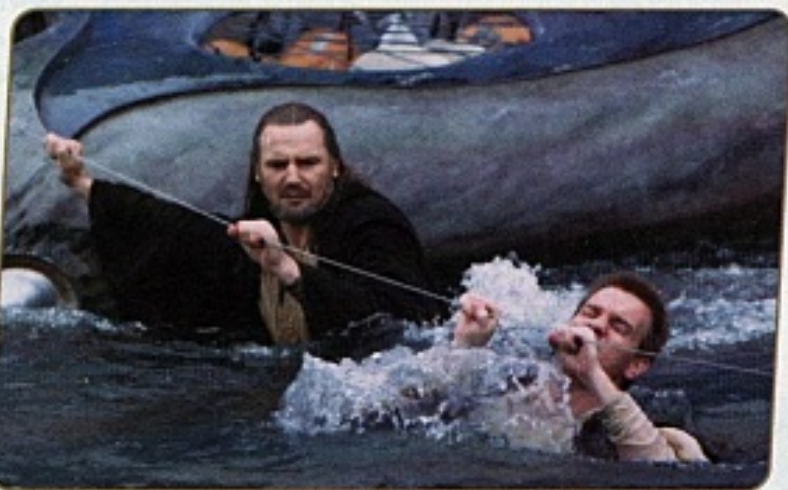
Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan Kenobi) and Liam Neeson (Qui-Gon Jinn) make their way along a cable during the filming of the waterfall escape sequence. Photo by Keith Henshere.

RM: Those times when exciting things were happening in six different places at once—how did you make the decision where to go?

JS: Finding out about it in the first place required daily phone calls, and I would have to sometimes go to the place where I had a hunch something was happening and let the chips fall where they may.

RM: So you really had an all-access pass.

JS: Yes. It was really George who gave it to me. He wanted this, and I always invited the people I was shooting to collaborate with me about how, where and when I could film them. I'd get to follow these people around with a camera. It was weird to be the one guy who would see it all, and it really gave me just an incredible education. I had some experience before I started, but this job was really a second film school for me. I didn't know anything about feature filmmaking. And then the movie was *Star Wars*, so it had this cultural impact that really lent it a lot of import and excitement. To be able to make a documentary first of all, a couple years out of film school, was an awesome opportunity. More than one person turned to me in the course of shooting and said, "You must have the coolest job in the world." 🙌



EXTENDED RACE, LAP 2
CUT SCENE NO. 2

SABRE MAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH **PABLO HELMAN**,
ILM'S SABRE DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR

by Ted A. Bohus

A native of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Pablo Helman joined Industrial Light & Magic in 1996 as the Sabre Department Supervisor. Previous to ILM, he was a compositing supervisor on *Independence Day* for Pacific Ocean Post, a digital compositor on *Apollo 13* and *Strange Days* for Digital Domain, and a Quantel Domino compositor on numerous projects for Digital Magic. Helman received a Masters of Arts in Education from Cal Poly Pomona and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Composition from UCLA. Recently, Helman sat down with *Insider* to talk about his involvement with *Star Wars* Episode I: *Attack of the Clones*.

TB: How and when did you begin working at ILM?

PH: I'd been around Los Angeles for about 15 years before I got to ILM working on different projects such as *Apollo 13* and I was the compositing supervisor on *Independence Day*. I had some friends at ILM and went over to look at the facility and loved it. They offered me a job as Sabre artist (laughs). Sabre System is not software for making lightsabers; it's a very interactive high resolution compositing system. That was five years ago. I've worked on projects such as *The Lost World* and *Wild Wild West*. Last summer the *Star Wars* Episode I DVD project came about, and I jumped at the opportunity to do it.

TB: Did you work on the feature film as well as the DVD version?

PH: Yes, I worked on Episode I. These films, Episode I and Episode II, take years to put together, and I was there at the beginning.

TB: Which sequences did you work on for Episode I?

PH: The lightsaber duel with Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon and Darth Maul in the Power Room. I worked on [the lightsabers] to make sure they looked the same as they did in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. I had to make sure the digital files matched the optical. I also worked on the scene with the first hologram, again, to make sure they matched.

TB: Why were you chosen to work on the DVD release?

PH: I worked on commercials for eight months, and they needed someone to think of a different way to produce the work. We all wanted to find a different way to work on the deleted scenes. They also knew that George Lucas was in Australia shooting Episode II. I talked to him a couple of times about the deleted scenes he wanted to do, and they felt I could get it done with minimal distraction.

TB: So there were already a number of deleted scenes that George knew he wanted put back in there?

PH: Yes. For example, there was a sequence involving waterfalls when Qui-Gon, Jar Jar, and Obi-Wan get to Naboo in their watercraft. It didn't get into Episode I, but George wanted it back. It was a big undertaking.





TB: What exactly happens in the deleted scene?

PH: They come up to the surface in the ship and get caught in a powerful current that carries them to a huge waterfall. They save themselves, but not the ship. That goes over in the waterfall.

TB: Was this scene taken out for pacing or it just wasn't finished in time?

PH: I'm not sure, but don't forget that this kind of scene is very difficult to accomplish. We were thinking about shooting waterfalls because water is very difficult to simulate, especially to convey scale. These waterfalls were supposed to be huge! So they decided to put the scene aside (laughs). I'm sure we'll have a few of those in Episode II.

TB: So, basically, the scene was planned and only partially completed. You didn't just pop in a deleted scene; you actually had to complete the CGI.

PH: Right.

TB: Approximately how long is the scene?

PH: About three minutes.

TB: Was the Boonta Eve Podrace another scene with additional footage?

PH: Yes, we added one more lap to the race. In the original movie there were two laps; now there's three laps. There are additional things that happen to Anakin in that lap.

TB: Do we get to meet any new characters during that lap?

PH: Not during the race, but before the race there are a bunch of new characters introduced. The characters are the actual racers. For instance, we get to meet Ratts Tyerell and his family—his wife and three kids. Ratts is one of the racers who gets killed. Before the Podrace there is an announcer that introduces all these different characters. There are also a couple of characters introduced we never saw before. Another new scene involves Anakin's friend picking him up before the race.

TB: How many different new scenes are put into the DVD version?

PH: Seven.

TB: Could you describe how these new scenes were decided upon from storyboard to animatics to the screen?

PH: When we started working on this, we got together with George and videotaped his comments with a very rough animatic put together at the Ranch. He would explain what he wanted for a specific sequence. There were very rough drawings and some dialog. So we took all that in and developed it for the movie. In fact, the development worked so well that about half of what we did ended up in the movie. I think George re-cut the Podrace to include the additional lap.

TB: How long did it take to put the DVD project together?

PH: About six months. We presented George with 220 new shots.



COMPLETE PODRACE GRID SEQUENCE CUT SCENE NO. 1

TB: How does George feel about the completed DVD project?

PH: It pleased George very much that we were able to put this together. I had a great time talking with him while working on this DVD project.

TB: How far along is Episode II?

PH: We have more shots finalized on this one than we did at the same time during Episode I.

TB: Are there going to be more effects shots on Episode II than Episode I?

PH: (Laughs) I think so. There are about 2,200 shots in Episode II, but as far as production goes, we're ahead of schedule. On a film like this everything is effects work because every shot involves effects. The film is being shot in High Definition, so every shot is being touched digitally somehow.

TB: I guess the film will be screened in Digital format and also transferred to film for traditional screenings.

PH: Yes, there will be two different mediums for screenings.

TB: How do you think it looks?

PH: It looks great! I don't think the public, the audience, will be able to tell whether it was shot on film or not, because it looks like film. When you look at it on a digital projection system the colors are incredible, very saturated and film-like. 🍿

RANCH ON THE SIDE

WINED, DINED, AND DIGITALLY REMASTERED
WITH EPISODE I ON DVD

by Terry Coleman for *Star Wars Insider*

For those who've never had the pleasure of taking a pilgrimage to Skywalker Ranch ... well, it's actually a lot like being in a George Lucas movie. Once off the congested US Highway 101, you quickly move into a non-industrialized Mecca that combines bit of otherworldliness with more than a little excitement ... which I found while negotiating the multiple hairpin turns leading up to the Ranch's entrance. But I managed to make it in one piece, and on time, for Lucasfilm's sneak peek press conference of the highly awaited *Star Wars Episode I: Phantom Menace* DVD.

Unlike a lot of press events, there was nary a plate of rubber chicken or cheese food in sight. What a treat to sip fresh, fragrant coffee while perusing one of the countless shelves of books throughout the Ranch complex! Where else are you likely to find technical books on filmmaking setting on the shelf alongside the novels of Balzac and the *Complete Sherlock Holmes*?

Great surroundings, cushy seats and crystal-clear Dolby sound notwithstanding, the best part of the day, of course, was interviewing the lead creative talents behind the DVD. When I asked about potential piracy concerns, principal engineer Rick Dean remarked soberly that "If you talk too much about security procedures, you're no longer secure," to which legendary DVD producer Van Ling added, "Quality is the best defense against piracy." Ling also explained very reasonably why the decision was made to favor high-resolution





image quality over DTS sound, given the space they had allocated on the DVD for the film.

Marketing VP Jim Ward and producer Rick McCallum could not answer when Lucasfilm would bring the original trilogy of films to DVD. Instead, McCallum regaled us with stories of visiting movie theaters the night of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* opened, including the charming tale of one man who proposed to his girlfriend in front of the assembled crowd of fellow *Star Wars* fans.

For the grand finale, George Lucas appeared, looking a lot more relaxed than he did at the end of filming Episode I. What I found fascinating was the number of journalists asking about the digital video editing techniques used in *The Phantom Menace*. Lucas politely reminded everyone that he began his career as a film editor. Digital video editing, to George, is simply another tool that doesn't make for better or worse films; the technique just gives a director more flexibility. This was supported by comments made by ILM's Pablo Helman earlier in the day, when he described how computer-generated effects merge with those of more traditional media to create a more realistic visual environment.

References from Jar Jar to Aki in the *Final Fantasy* film were the heart of a number of questions concerning so-called "virtual" actors, and George saved his most candid comments for them: "The whole debate over this issue is ludicrous, because there is no such thing as a virtual actor." He then described how all of these characters were the creation not of a computer, but of very human artists, engineers, editors and directors, who achieve their results with craft, inspiration and talent. "No computer will be able to be an actor," said George, "until you have an AI able to think and react in as quirky a manner as a human. And that won't happen in our lifetimes." This came as quite a definitive statement from someone who's been at the forefront of cinematic innovation for the past quarter of a century. ☺

FINISHING TOUCHES

AN INTERVIEW WITH **JON ALEXANDER**,
ILM'S COMPOSITE SUPERVISOR

by Ted A. Bohus

Jon Alexander joined Industrial Light & Magic in 1986 as a motion control camera operator in the animation department to work on the feature film *Howard the Duck*. In 1987 he moved to the Optical Department, and in 1993 he transitioned into the computer graphics department. Prior to ILM, Alexander worked for Calico Creations in Los Angeles as a Camera Operator, working on over 200 commercials in the area of broadcast promotion. *Insider* cornered Alexander to discuss his role in the restoration of Episode I's deleted scenes.

TB: How did the idea for reworking the deleted scenes begin?

JA: There were a bunch of shots that were not included in the original movie for many reasons such as budget or time. George was the director and could have put anything he wanted in the first one. The DVD was an opportunity for George to rethink things that he wanted to do better. There were over 200 shots that they wanted to either revisit or do as originals. The majority of it was just re-editing the Podrace.

TB: Were any additional scenes totally created from scratch?





JA: We didn't shoot anything new, but there were a few shots that we took a piece from here and a piece from there to help bridge some gaps.

TB: What materials did you get to start work on the new scenes?

JA: The art department or editorial department at the Ranch would come up with an animatic. We would get the sorted-out animatics with very simple animation and very simple backgrounds; they're not necessarily the final plates. It starts telling the story, but it's better when we can start using the real plates and some real animation. Then we can borrow something from one scene and make it look like another camera angle or even a double cut on something just to help flesh out the story. Some of the new Podrace stuff was just going to be an alternate take or alternate version, but I think George liked what he saw and actually decided to replace what they had.

TB: Is there going to be a blooper reel?

JA: Yeah, we have some blooper things in there just for fun and to flesh out the DVD. We have some characters pretending to be actors, that sort of thing.

TB: How were you first approached to do the project, and what exactly does a composite supervisor do?

JA: I was the composite supervisor for one of the sections of *The Phantom Menace*. I get all the film elements, so if they do an explosion

over here and a CG creature over there and a live action background plate over there, what I do is get all those pieces and supervise putting them together. I'm like the last stop. I become a color continuity guy as well, keeping track of that. In the old days it would be the role that an optical supervisor would play.

Our main goal here is creating a consistent look. We get direction from the art department, but in general we're getting a target to match to and it could be a total live action thing or live action and CG. We have to match one scene to the other, so we have to look at such mundane things as grain patterns and certainly contrast levels.

We also make sure that the perspective is correct and depth cues are right. You need to know your atmospheres are right, so that you don't have mixtures of something that was lit by an orange light next to something that was lit by a blue light.

TB: You just need to make sure that the new scenes match flawlessly with the existing footage.

JA: Right, and ideally if I do my job correctly, you shouldn't see the job I've done.

TB: We know about a few of the deleted scenes such as the Podrace, the pre-Podrace and the waterfall. Can you think of any other previously deleted scenes that we will get to see on the DVD?

JA: We added some more scenes on the planet where the Jedi had their council meeting. ☺



A large, detailed image of Jar Jar Binks, a Gungan character from Star Wars. He is shown from the chest up, with his head tilted back and his mouth open as if he is speaking or shouting. His skin is a mottled brown and tan color. He has large, floppy ears and a wrinkled forehead. His arms are raised, with his hands open. The background is a bright orange with a repeating pattern of white circles and lines, resembling a stylized sun or a patterned fabric. The title "JAR JAR" is written in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline, positioned at the top of the image.

JAR JAR

*I*t's been two years since we caught our first glimpse of those now famous floppy ears and the lanky, uncoordinated walk. With the premiere of *Star Wars* Episode II less than a year away, it's time to touch base again with the man behind the most famous Gungan of all.

If there was one thing Jar Jar Binks did in *The Phantom Menace*, it was to leave a lasting impression on anyone and everyone he ran into on screen and off. Working on *The Phantom Menace* left an equal impact on Jar Jar's portrayer, Ahmed Best.

Filming *The Phantom Menace* will always be special for Best, predominately for its newness. "I probably enjoyed more in Episode I, mainly because it was such a new experience for everybody. Once it's done, it's kind of easier and the mystery is a little shaded, but in Episode I,

BINKS

Take 2

An Interview with
Ahmed Best

by Helen Keier

I was so excited to see what it was going to be like, and I don't think that brand-new excitement will ever be there again for anything." Best says, "I was so excited about what Jar Jar was going to look like, how he was going to move, how he was going to be completed, and now I pretty much know that. I still love playing the character, just the nuance, and the discovery of him."

The past few years have only enriched the *The Phantom Menace* experience for Best. A martial arts enthusiast, Best recently watched *The Phantom Menace* in its entirety, intending to watch it for Darth Maul, just as a fan. "I hadn't watched it in a while. I put it on just to see the Darth Maul-Obi-Wan Kenobi fight, because I'm very into the martial arts and fight choreography. But I decided to watch the whole thing through, and I think I enjoyed it more this time than I did the first time I saw it," he says. In viewing the entire film, Best was reminded of some of the more comedic elements and Buster Keaton-influenced moves in the film, particularly the ones during Jar Jar's climactic melee against the battle droids. "There were a

lot of things I had forgotten about that I did, or that I'd forgotten about the scenes that we did. I really enjoyed watching it. I think it's a great film, and not just because I'm in it. I think some people didn't give it as much of a chance as it deserved." Speaking of giving credit where it's due, seeing Liam Neeson again also reminded Best of the depth of talent that went into making Episode I. "Without being too much, [Liam] just commands



Ahmed Best, host of *starwars.com*'s On Location video series, joins the Stunt Coordinator on the stage floor for a segment called "The Lowdown with Nick Gilliard." Photo by Sue Adler.

"People don't realize that as much negativity as there was, there was maybe ten times as much positive feedback that I got personally."
—Ahmed Best

the camera. He is an amazing actor. He just captivated me," Best adds.

Best learned a lot on a personal level from playing Jar Jar. Aware of the different perceptions of the character, he balances the good reactions with the bad, even if that balance requires a dose of realism. "Jar Jar was a part that I played, and I played it to the best of my ability. That's all that I really cared about and was concerned with," he says. "People don't realize that as much negativity as there was, there was maybe ten times as much positive feedback that I got personally. People tend to focus on what's negative, and of course the news media thrives off of it. That's how their businesses are perpetuated, by negative energy. That's pretty much all you heard. But for every negative letter, there were maybe ten thousand positive letters." In

particular, Best has enjoyed receiving letters from children—some as young as six, and in their own handwriting. Fan feedback like this, says Best, "is bigger to me than anything I can imagine."

For Best, Episode II was easier to make than *The Phantom Menace*, as Episode I served as a trial run, a learning exercise for everyone involved. At the time preparations for Episode I began, much of the technology used to bring Jar Jar and other special effects to the screen had not been perfected, much less invented, so everything was a bit hectic and frenzied. This time around, Best tells *Insider*, filming was a lot more comfortable. Rob Coleman and John Knoll (Industrial Light and Magic's Animation Director and Visual Effects Supervisor, respectively), made the process almost routine and much more relaxed. Best felt that the technical processes being more streamlined, and being able

With *On Location* director Spencer Susser behind the camera, Ahmed Best takes yet another opportunity to remind *starwars.com* visitors which episode he's working on. Photo by Sue Adler.

to build upon his prior knowledge of the character's background, made his job as an actor in Episode II that much easier.

However, one thing that hasn't changed much for Best is the purely physical aspect of playing Jar Jar. A typical day on the set for Best begins bright and early, at 6:30 a.m., with a few hours to get into costume, and then four or more set-ups (scenes to be staged and shot). The physical demands of playing Jar Jar in a hot and constricting costume were the same as his first experience, with one notable exception—the shoes. While filming Episode I, Best wore large, cumbersome prosthetic feet to accommodate the animators who would later add the computer generated Jar Jar to the scene. This time around, thanks to technological advances, Best was able to wear more accommodating shoes. In Episode II, Best reports, Jar Jar wears Air Jordans, even if the audience will never actually see them.

When not in front of the movie camera, Best filmed his now famous "On Location" spots for *starwars.com*. The "On Location" spots were a lot of fun for Best, as interviewing was a new experience for him. The opportunity to do the "On Location" spots quickly grabbed and held Best's attention during the downtimes on set. "I knew everybody from Episode I, and I knew what *Star Wars* was about, being a fan, so it was easy for me to go around and ask people questions ... They were questions I wanted to know about what was going on and consequently became questions everybody wants to know." However, making the transition from actor to interviewer was hard for Best, partly due to the passive rather than interactive nature of act-



BEST'S BEST

Favorite Star Wars Moment
When Han Solo kissed Princess Leia in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Han was the underdog, and he got the princess. I think that's cool.

Favorite Non-Star Wars Movie
Growing up, it was *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. My favorite film of last year was *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Favorite Website
www.ahmedbest.com



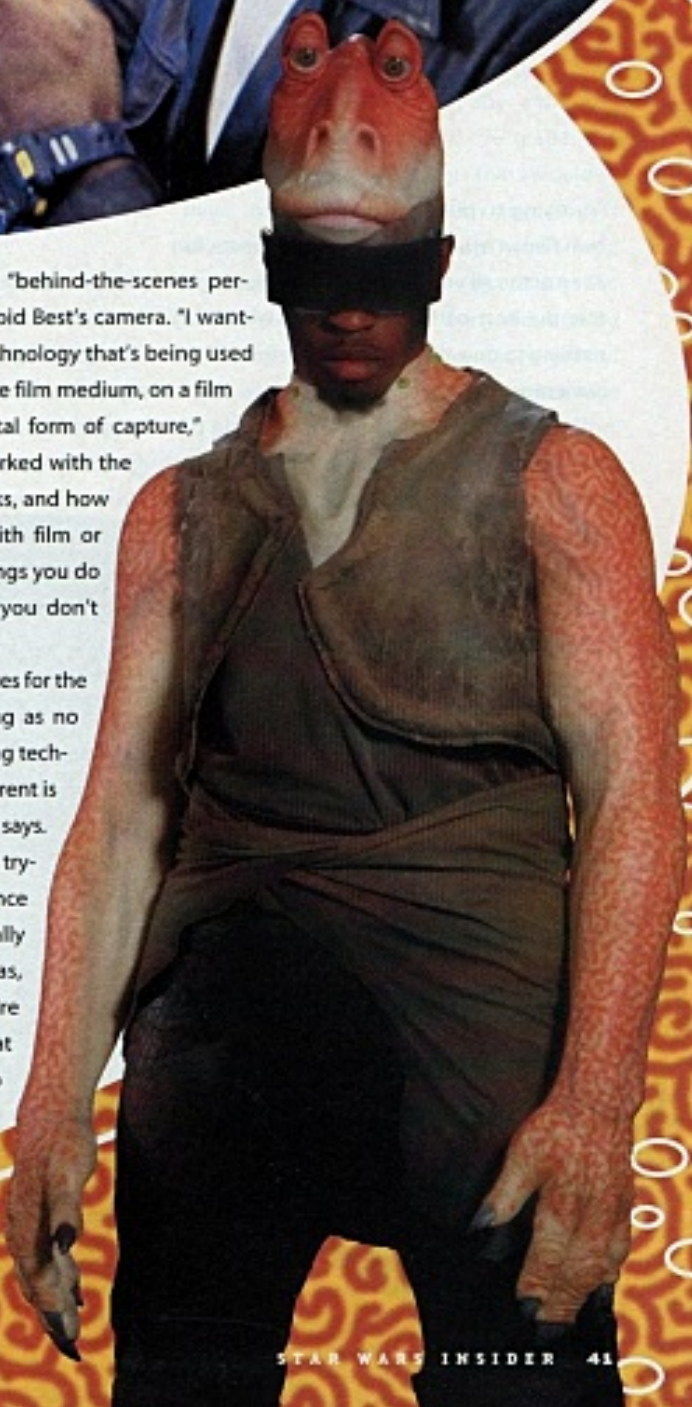


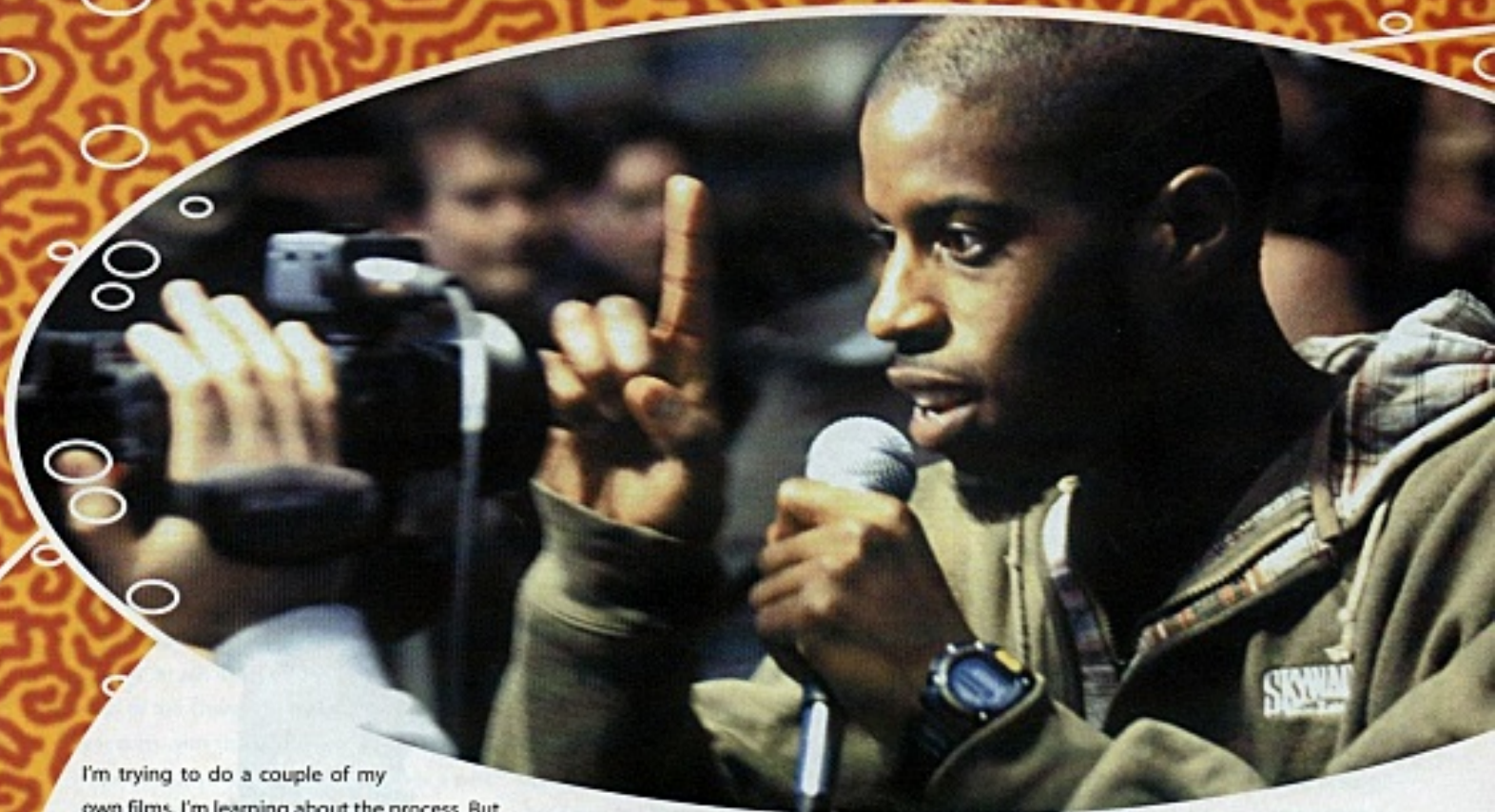
ing and performing. Finding themselves in front of the camera caused others to be "nervous" around Best. "When you point a camera in somebody's face, immediately they feel they have to perform. It was very difficult for people to just be natural, and just talk to me. Some felt like their privacy was being invaded. I had to remind people when I was doing it that it was just me. It's not a person you don't know," he says. Although Best initially didn't realize how self-consciously people act while being filmed, he quickly learned how to put people at ease during the interviews.

While Best's personal favorite installment of the "On Location" series was his lightsaber duel with Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard, he feels his pieces with George Lucas stand out as being particularly informative about what goes into making a *Star Wars* film. One interview Best wanted to get but didn't was with Episodes I and II's Cinematographer David Tattersall. Widely considered one of the best in the business, Tattersall previously worked with Lucas on *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and on movies such as *Con Air*, *Soldier*, *The Green Mile*, and *The Vertical Limit*. Being

a more "behind-the-scenes person," Tattersall was able to avoid Best's camera. "I wanted to talk to him about the technology that's being used because this is the first time the film medium, on a film of this scale, has used a digital form of capture," Best says. "How the lenses worked with the camera, how the transfer works, and how it's different than working with film or working with a videotape. Things you do have to worry about, things you don't have to worry about."

Although there are differences for the crew, Best views digital filming as no different from traditional filming techniques. "The only way it's different is if people think about it," Best says. "All you're doing [as an actor] is trying to get the best performance possible, and you're not really thinking about the cameras, what kind of cameras they're using ... I'm interested in that kind of thing. I'm very into technology; I'm very into filmmaking."





I'm trying to do a couple of my own films. I'm learning about the process. But as an actor, all you do is just worry about getting the best performance. It has absolutely nothing to do with what the guys behind the camera are doing."

The bulk of photography on Episode II is complete, but Best's work is far from done. Looping (re-recording dialog that may not have been clear during initial filming or needs to be added) will take place later this year or early next, and pick-ups (filming reshoots and additional scenes) will likely be filmed this fall.

Episode II promises to bring us a very different Jar Jar. As Best tells us, Jar Jar is now ten years older and has matured, having "seen the worlds, so to speak."

One of the most interesting things

for Best this time around was discovering and portraying how Jar Jar has grown and evolved since the first movie. Episode II is Best's second film, but his first sequel, and as he puts it, "Every time you see a sequel, you wonder how the character is going to change from one film to the next." With this in mind, before he received the Episode II script, Best tried to figure out how he was going to age Jar Jar. According to Best, this isn't as easy as it sounds, since in Episode I, Jar Jar was essentially a great big kid. That was probably my biggest challenge in Episode II—trying to make Jar Jar seem mature, without taking away any of his sense of fun, and any of his child-like sense of discovery," he says.

On Episode II, Best worked with everyone equally ... and took away from the experience the same thing he did from Episode I—a deeper respect and admiration for everyone he worked with. Recalling the first time he worked with Star Wars newcomer Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker), he says, "He was fantastic.

He just fit right in. You're seeing someone

totally different. He's not an older kid; he's not a younger adult. He's the perfect guy to be both Anakin Skywalker and Darth Vader."

Like most actors, Best has a favorite set-side memory, and his involves the documentary crew and Rob Coleman. "One time I was just hanging out with the documentary crew, and I grabbed one of their cameras. I started shooting people, just for fun, for the documentary," he says, "I was shooting Rob Coleman, [who] also had a part in the film [in addition to working on the animation]. George saw me shooting Rob rehearsing his line, and he came over and started directing Rob. He really got into it to the point of where it stopped being just for fun, and it started really being like George Lucas is directing this scene. He really brought out the character in a guy who's never acted before. He just reached in and pulled out what he needed from Rob. It made him an actor. I found that to be amazingly incredible and just the talent of George Lucas. Not many people talk about it or witness it really. George Lucas is a filmmaker. He is a director.

When he wants to bring out a performance, he can bring it



[LEFT] When not fulfilling Gungan duties, Ahmed Best roamed the Episode II set tracking down on location interviews. Photo by Sue Adler.

[BELOW] A giggled Neimoidian spills juicy on-set gossip to Ahmed Best and the on location camera. Photo by Sue Adler.

out of anybody. It doesn't matter who you are. [Rob] wanted a line, so George gave him a line. After George was finished with him, this guy could have played Lawrence of Arabia if he wanted."

Now that principal photography has concluded, work can begin on what makes Episode II a complete *Star Wars* movie—the effects. Best says that Episode II promises, like Episode I, to turn up the notch a bit on what ILM can do. "The effects are definitely more intense. ILM always tries to give you something you've never seen before, and they're going to do it this time, too. They're going to put you right into the middle of everything," he says. Best's admiration for Jar Jar's animators extends beyond their *Star Wars* work. "I saw a couple clips of *A.I.*, and I knew it was ILM right off the bat, just because of the meticulous detail," Best notes. "They really strive for perfection, and they make things that look unreal real, as opposed to a lot of other digital houses that try to make things that look unreal, unreal, you know? I think the focus of ILM is 'Yeah, of course these vehicles fly—that's what they're supposed to do, instead of Oh look ... the vehicle can fly.'"

As many actors do after finishing one project, Best is looking ahead to his next and is taking the time to turn to his other interests. With interests ranging from acting

to filmmaking to music to writing, there's no telling where Best will turn up next.

Such varied interests raises the question as to what inspires him. Best explains that he simply looks to the world around him for funny things write about. "There's a lot out there that makes me laugh," he says. "That's what I want to do. I want to do crazy things that make people laugh and make people think. I'm really more interested in the Woody Allen type of filmmaking than I am the *Boyz in the Hood* type of filmmaking. I want to go that route. I think there are enough people writing about shooting people and killing people. I want to write about things that make people think." Best also turns this introspection to consideration of more weighty issues. "I find humor in anything, especially the newspaper. Politics are killing me right now."

While Best won't be returning to Stomp, the performance group that brought him to the attention of Lucasfilm when Episode I was being cast, he has just returned from Europe where he completed filming on a Stomp movie, titled *Vacuum*, due out in January. Although many fans

would love to see

Best on stage with the group again, it's not in his plans. "I don't have the endurance. I'm in pain right now [from filming the movie]," he says.

Best's day-to-day life hasn't changed much because of *Star Wars* largely because he's behind a mask. "People don't get it. It's a lot harder to do if you're not seen. Life has only stepped up one step," he says. "It hasn't blown me through the roof yet. I've made some great friends in Ewan McGregor, Natalie [Portman], Hayden, Liam, George, and Rick [McCallum], and I think that my life has been greatly enhanced because of the friendships I've made. I've gotten through a lot of doors that I wouldn't have otherwise, so I keep my fingers crossed. Episode II probably won't help because of the Episode I experience [I'm behind the mask again]." If anyone is going to change that, it's Best. "I've got to get out there and pound the pavement and change it. I don't have to worry about typecasting. I have to worry about casting in general. I just have to get past that one." 🙌



A TOUCH

ANTHONY



Photo by Lisa Tomasetti

HOWRY

DANIELS ON EPISODE II

"You wouldn't want my life to get boring, would you?"

Anthony Daniels has become a fixture in the Star Wars universe.

He's back for Episode II in an expanded role: not only voicing C-3PO, but operating the puppet as well. Brian J. Robb talks to the actor about the challenges of bringing the droid to life once more in Episode II.

Star Wars Insider: So, you're puppeteering C-3PO in Episode II. What can you tell us about that experience?

Anthony Daniels: In Australia I was immensely helped with the puppet by Don Bies, who did R2-D2 again. Don and the team of Trevor Tighe, Justin Dix, Zynep "Zed" Selcuk, Martin Crowther and Matt Sloan were just the most tremendous support group. I would rehearse with them and a big mirror, and Zed would tell me what looked good, because there is no time to rehearse on the set. You'd better know what you're doing by the time you arrive [on set]. It's very lickety split, there's no time to mess about. So part of my homework was to rehearse... It's like rehearsing anything. Rehearsing is hard work because you keep doing it over and over again, and it gets boring, frankly.

With the puppet it's very physically hard. Anna Bies [Don's wife] made me a harness like a Steadicam harness, and I wore this thing on my front. It was terrifyingly heavy. I'm not a weightlifter, I'm aware what it's doing to my spine, and in fact I kind of redesigned it so the weight goes down onto my hips, which then goes straight down into your legs. I went to the gym every morning, and in this beautiful hotel in Australia I would be in the gym at 6 a.m. or 5:30 a.m. By the time I arrived at the studio, I'd be

exhausted. I had to lie down. That was kind of stupid, really. But it's the only way. Because you're going to hurt yourself otherwise, or you're going to fall over. Also, one day my mind drifted and I suddenly felt everything fall, and like the Tower of Pisa, I nearly fell sideways. Once it would go, there'd be no stopping it.

The support team there was immensely good. We re-jigged as many things as we could to make it a bit more lifelike. You'll see what I mean. It gave me the chance to experiment with how to get expression from my body, my face, my head, through him. I will say that the bits I have watched of myself doing it—well, I don't take a tape home and drool over myself in the evenings—but for technical reasons it's very useful to know what it looked like, as I can't tell. There's no point in having a monitor over there, or a mirror... If we were doing it on a long-term basis, probably I would have a monitor, but it's just easier to kind of try it out. It's not like I'm playing King Lear. There are some interesting scenes, and that I like too.

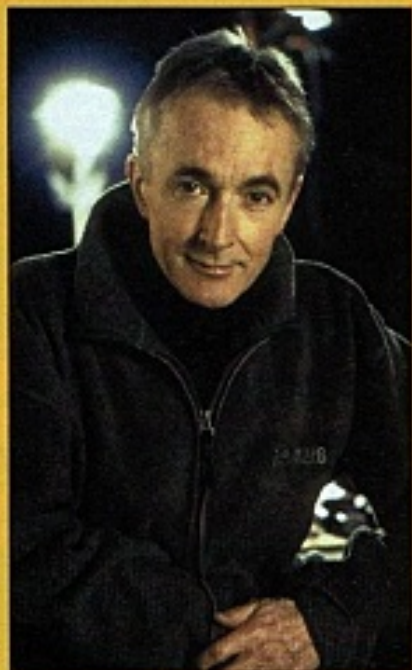


Photo by Keith Woodhewer

BY BRIAN J. ROBB

How much of the performance of C-3PO do you think is voice, how much is physical, how much is the two together?

That's quite a good question. The one thing you've possibly missed out is a kind of weird magic that sort of happened on the first day that I stood in the desert in 1976. That C-3PO saw to this himself. He's an entity that has something to do with me, something to do with George, with the suit, the voice, the environment... It's a little like one of those movies where there is a puppet that takes over, particularly in those movies the puppet gets hold of shears or a knife and kills everybody. I don't think C-3PO's got quite that far yet, but there is a kind of magic that happens with him.

It's definitely a combination of voice and movement, because he doesn't move all the time. That would become tiresome. I'm quite selective in movements. You really have to remember less is more, because a small movement after a period of rest can speak

"You really have to remember less is more, because a small movement after a period of rest can speak volumes."

volumes. Also he's a very distracting character in the gold, or in any format because he's visually interesting.

We are all used to looking at humans. I used to tell Mark Hamill not to bother acting, because in the middle of a scene all I had to do was just turn my head and it would immediately draw the audience's eye because it's a glittering shape. Your eye will be pulled toward it like a jackdaw to a piece of jewelry. Fortunately, he ignored that suggestion and acted anyway. But it is a combination. It's a whole mannerism, and the mannerism is locked into the voice and the movement.

Are we going to see some new facets of the character in Episode II?

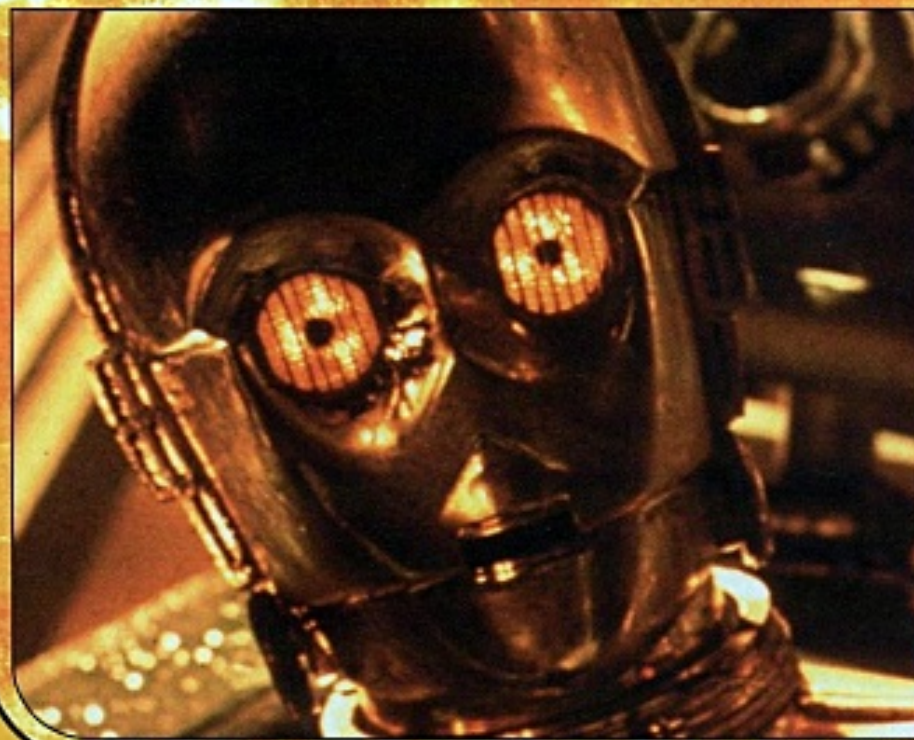
You're going to see new stuff, yes. I added in one line. I just turned a sentence around to give the character somewhere to have come from. I mean, he's not going anywhere, as we already know where he's been. Possibly I've added a wry touch. A touch of wry, yeah.

You did some Episode II filming on location?

I went to Tunisia. The odd thing was, I was in Morocco last year and got out of the car in the desert and had this real spine tingle because the air, the light, the sunshine, the smell was so reminiscent of Tunisia all those years ago. I wasn't in the same place, but, it being desert sun, it was weird... slightly unreal.

Was it odd to walk onto a *Star Wars* set and find that the crew had Australian accents?

THE MAN IN THE GOLDEN





A moment of déjà vu—director George Lucas and C-3PO (Anthony Daniels) confer on an upcoming shot of the Lars homestead. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

SUIT

ANTHONY DANIELS ON EPISODES I, IV, V, AND VI

So, there he was, stuck in the desert, dressed in a golden suit in the summer of 1976 playing a robot in a science-fiction movie where everything seemed to be going wrong. Actor **Anthony Daniels** little realized that this role would be one he'd be associated with for over 25 years. We all know the stories about the suit and how uncomfortable it was that first time around, but what did Daniels really think of his work on the Classic Trilogy and Episode I?

When did you realize that *Star Wars* was going to be something a bit bigger than the cheap science-fiction film you thought you had been making in 1976?

Well, it opened in America six months before it opened here. Immediately the cover of *Time Magazine*, of *Newsweek*, was *Star Wars*. All the publicity was phenomenal. The British public, actually, as far as I remember, were very irritated that they had to wait so long. I sat in England thinking, "Yeah, that weird movie seems to have worked."

Did you get any feedback from anyone else?

No, because at the time Lucasfilm were very intent on pretending that I was a robot, so nobody actually knew I was in the movie. Which was frankly a little difficult. They were worried that if they said there was a human being inside,

that it would spoil the impression. That left me somewhat out in the cold because nobody knew I was in it.

Did you feel that the suffering you'd undergone in the suit in Tunisia and London was somehow more worthwhile now that the film was a huge success?

Definitely, because like anything you do that's hard work, it's great if somebody says "Oh, great, thanks, really good. I like that." Praise or acknowledgement is very important in anything you do. You shouldn't look for it, but it's kind of disappointing if it's not there. What did I know about movies, or show business, or entertainment? The fact is that I had, up to the last minute, thought that *Star Wars* was something I didn't really talk about to anybody, because I was vaguely ashamed. It made me feel quite stupid not to have realized. But I was not alone. There were a lot of very high-up executives who also could be called stupid, as they didn't realize either.

So when did you feel that you started to get some recognition?

Only around *The Empire Strikes Back*, when they began to realize that it was okay to say I was in there. I think they realized they'd been overly protective of the character. Nobody's more protective of the character than me. >>



A jaded Artoo-Detoo appears unimpressed by the acting talents of Anthony Daniels (C-3PO). Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

Very, very strange. And the first time it hit me ... almost with a kind of sadness. I was suddenly the Grand Old Man, as the phrase goes, of *Star Wars*, because there's only George and myself, I think, who have gone this far. I think there's one person at

Lucasfilm who's worked there longer than me. [Lucy Autrey Wilson in Lucas Licensing and Ben Burt at Lucasfilm are the other two who have been involved as long as Daniels and George Lucas himself.] It's a strange feeling. Curiously, looking now at Episode II

and understanding the story, and seeing where it will link up and knowing where it will lead, there is a kind of preparatory sadness in me at the ending. Now, we're talking 2002, 2005 when it comes out, but I can already grieve for the end of the thing, if that doesn't sound too weird. Because one can see a life cycle. And life cycles begin and they end and they start again. This one, I think probably, that will be the end of it. That'll be fine, because by then I'll be the Grand Old Man of the *Star Wars* thing! But it is strange to meet people playing roles that have been touched by other people, to meet Ewan McGregor as Alec Guinness. He's just terrific.

Do you see any of Guinness in Ewan McGregor?

I think he's his own person. I think in this one it became clear to me that Ewan has decided to make the part his own. He gets to do fun things as well. What a nice guy.

THE MAN IN THE GOLDEN SUIT [CONTINUED]

I've always been very fond of Threepio, and I've always felt that he slightly needs—how can I say—not protecting, but he needs looking after.

However, you did have some hesitation about returning to the role for *The Empire Strikes Back*?

Oh, yes! Doing *Star Wars* was really quite an unpleasant experience in many, many ways. There's no point in pretending it wasn't. That's why the enjoyment of the audience is so important. Because had I not invested so much of myself and my—for want of better words, skills—if I hadn't put any effort in, I wouldn't have felt particularly interested in getting anything out. But I put so much effort in, and in the worst kind of circumstances: the weather, the physical circumstances, were extraordinary. Nobody could ever have dreamt of the heat of that summer: the heat of 1976.

The summer in London was probably worse than Tunisia.

Oh, far worse! Far worse! Tunisia—at least the air is clean and dry, and the gold suit used to bounce a lot of the reflective heat off. Mark Hamill got a greater suntan standing next to me. But the heat in London, with the ambient heat of the sun and the big lamps ... I must have been pretty healthy not to have had heatstroke, I now realize.

But you must have felt underappreciated during production, especially when there was a proposal to re-dub your voice.

Well, I didn't know that until the end, of course. I did actually have some books of matches printed up with the words in gold on black, "Threepio is human," because I felt it was easy for people to forget that I was actually in there. Which in a way is a compliment. You have to remember that George Lucas had everything to think about. Everything. He was in a nightmare world. Absolutely nightmare. It was all going wrong. My suit kept falling apart, R2-D2 kept breaking down, the Jawas' eyes kept going off, my eyes kept going off. Not my fault, but when people say "his eyes are off," and they're pointing at you, you think it's your fault. The fact that there's no way can you get at the batteries or wires takes a bit of getting used to. Often I would feel the object of criticism because the leg had fallen off, or a shoe had broken, or a piece had fallen off the arm.

You must have felt this wasn't what you'd trained for.

In every way. The reason I was there was because without ever knowing it I'd become good at mime at drama school, and I'm naturally quite a slight physique so I could be quite precise in the way I chose to move my body around. I'd done mask work at college, and I'd done white face work, and it all goes in your mind, and I had an aptitude for it. Fortunately of course, it looked beautiful. Liz Moore was the sculptress—and anybody who's been to the Barbican or Bradford The Art of *Star Wars* exhibition will see just how beautiful the costume is in reality. So I actually was using my skills, but not in the way that I ever would have imagined.

You came back for *Empire* and *Return of the Jedi*. Was it easier?

"What do you mean, naked?" Or, at least half-dressed. Anthony Daniels prepares for a Tatooine scene as C-3PO. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti

Have you done much with Hayden Christensen yet?

I think the greatest buzz people are going to get is from Hayden. I don't know where he came from, what he was doing before, but he's just terrific.

It's interesting watching him at work, because having just seen pictures and read a bit you reserve your judgment. Then seeing him in action is quite amazing.

He's just perfect. You get quite resentful of that kind of talent. You just think, "Why aren't I like that? Why don't I look like that?" We met for the first time at the opening party and I think we got on pretty well. He's a real pleasure to be with. You know, "professional" is an understood word. The cast was just so professional. Very professional atmosphere. The crew... it was like being in a family.



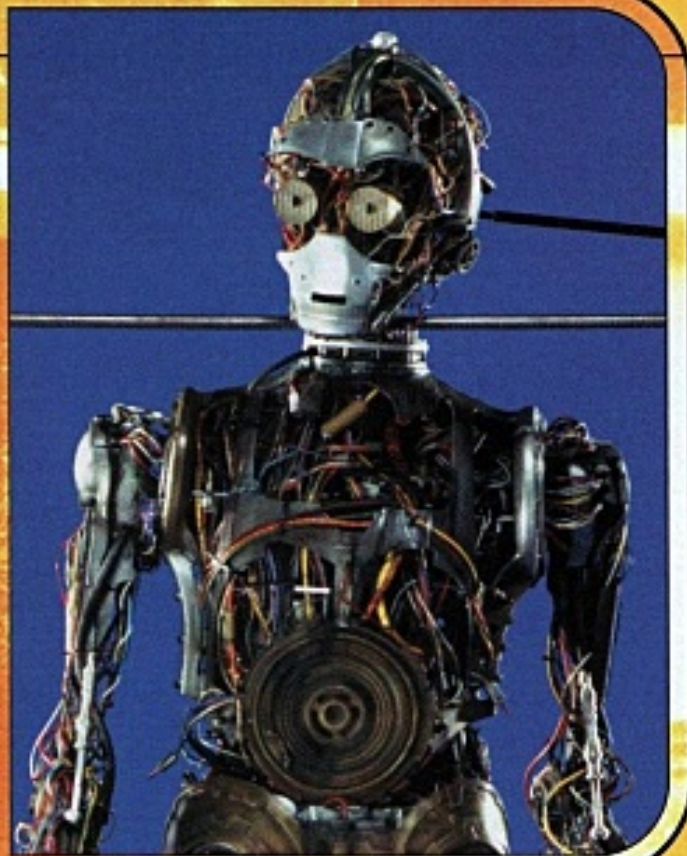
I found all sorts of excuses not to leave, to be honest. I was having a good time. I couldn't eat too much of the food as I was trying to keep my weight down, but it was exceptional. We were all very well treated, and we all seemed to be having fun. [The filming]

seemed to be working and the sets seemed to work. There weren't too many dramas. Everything looked good. I think people have confidence that the audience is going to like this film. And people get to do things. Natalie gets to do things, and Hayden and Ewan.

In *Empire* they remade the costume. Well, bits of it. The bits that didn't really work. It was very expensive, and nobody had ever made a costume like this. So it was not like they didn't care. It's just nobody quite knew how to do it. The one mistake they did possibly make was, having taken a mould of my body, they, with hindsight, should have put a little extra cladding on top of that. Because they made the suit onto the body the metal was clamped to it, which made things kind of difficult. It had various physical side effects, and so on. But in *Empire* they made a new suit. By *Return of the Jedi*, the suit was on and off in five minutes, so that was great.

Then, after 15 or 16 years you end up doing it all over again, in Episode I.

I was surprised when we made *The Empire Strikes Back*, then *Jedi*, then a long silence. I was very surprised when they reissued them [as the Special Editions]. Then I was surprised when they said they were going to do Episode I. I had a meeting with George where he described how Threepio came about. And he said, "You have a very small part. It's just to say hello." I was thrilled to be asked anyway. I would have been very sad not to be, to be honest. Then he told me what Threepio would look like and where he would be from. I thought he was telling me that Alec Guinness had made my character, and I was really, really pleased. I thought, "Alec was such a good friend that I think it's right that I was made by him." A couple of days later I suddenly realized that Anakin Skywalker was not played by Alec Guinness. I'm not very good on all these names. I thought, "Well, that really is interesting, that he's made by Anakin >>



ANTHONY DANIELS

People have said George Lucas seems relaxed on Episode II, more than he was on *The Phantom Menace*.

Sure. He's having fun, you know. He's got Rick McCallum producing. Rick is probably one of the greatest things to happen to Lucasfilm because, what can I say ... he's got an attitude. He's got a real attitude. He's got together this team that's been through trials of fire to get here, because they've all done *The Young Indiana Jones* together and they've done the last movie.

That's why it works—why there is this strange feeling in Australia that it is a team, that has been joined by the Australians, who have a great natural attitude to just getting on with the job. I think that's why it's noticeable. This is a great team built up over the course of time and trials, and it works very well. Rick's very good at what he does. He's the tough man ... but he cleverly makes sure that people have a good time when they're there. Hence I didn't want to leave. I

"Praise or acknowledgement is very important in anything you do. You shouldn't look for it, but it's kind of disappointing if it's not there."

think his mean streak comes out with his driving of buggies, golf carts.

The technology of these films has changed so much in the 25 years.

At the time of the first *Star Wars*, I'd never been in a movie, so I was amazed that the only person who saw the movie was the guy with his eye to the [camera] eyepiece, who

would nod if it was good. Now, with permission, one stands behind George, looking at this three-foot plasma screen, watching the movie. [George] is very patient, because I would like a private area to do that. But I think he's concentrating so much ... there are so many distractions on a set.

You must have had ups and downs between *Return of the Jedi* and *The Phantom Menace*, where you thought "Is this all I'm ever going to do?"

Oh yeah, there was a time I thought I should just stop. And then I thought, well, the income I get from various things is very welcome, but really my fondness for the character of C-3PO is what has kept me attached for 25 years. I just like him. He's weird. A bit strange. ☺

THE MAN IN THE GOLDEN SUIT [CONT.]

Skywalker, and he's a little boy." When we were filming, I said to George, "I'm a little concerned that Threepio is not moving in a way that I can relate to." I wasn't operating the puppet, which is a very, very beautiful puppet. If you ever see it close up, it's a stunning piece of machinery. It's a puppet with machinery inside it that actually works. A wonderful piece of craftsmanship. Somehow it didn't animate in a way that convinced me that it had life. I'm saying this now. Since I am doing the puppetry on Episode II, it's a real hostage to fortune. People may look at it and snigger, "Ah, big mouth Anthony! Screwed up, screwed up!"

Do you find that there is always something new in the character?

Yes, because of the circumstances George puts him in. But also I try and find new physical ways, and of course with a puppet that's dead easy, as it's like a different thing. But then the trick is to try and make him as much as the thing we know. It's kind of complicated, as I know where we're going. The other thing was that George was very kind in allowing me to make some script suggestions and accepting them. I'm talking about two or three pages out of 120. He's dealing with the whole 120. I can sit at home and chew over a line and think, "Well, maybe we need to refer to this, or say that..." You're not really meant to do that, I think. George can only say, "No, shut up. Say the words I wrote."

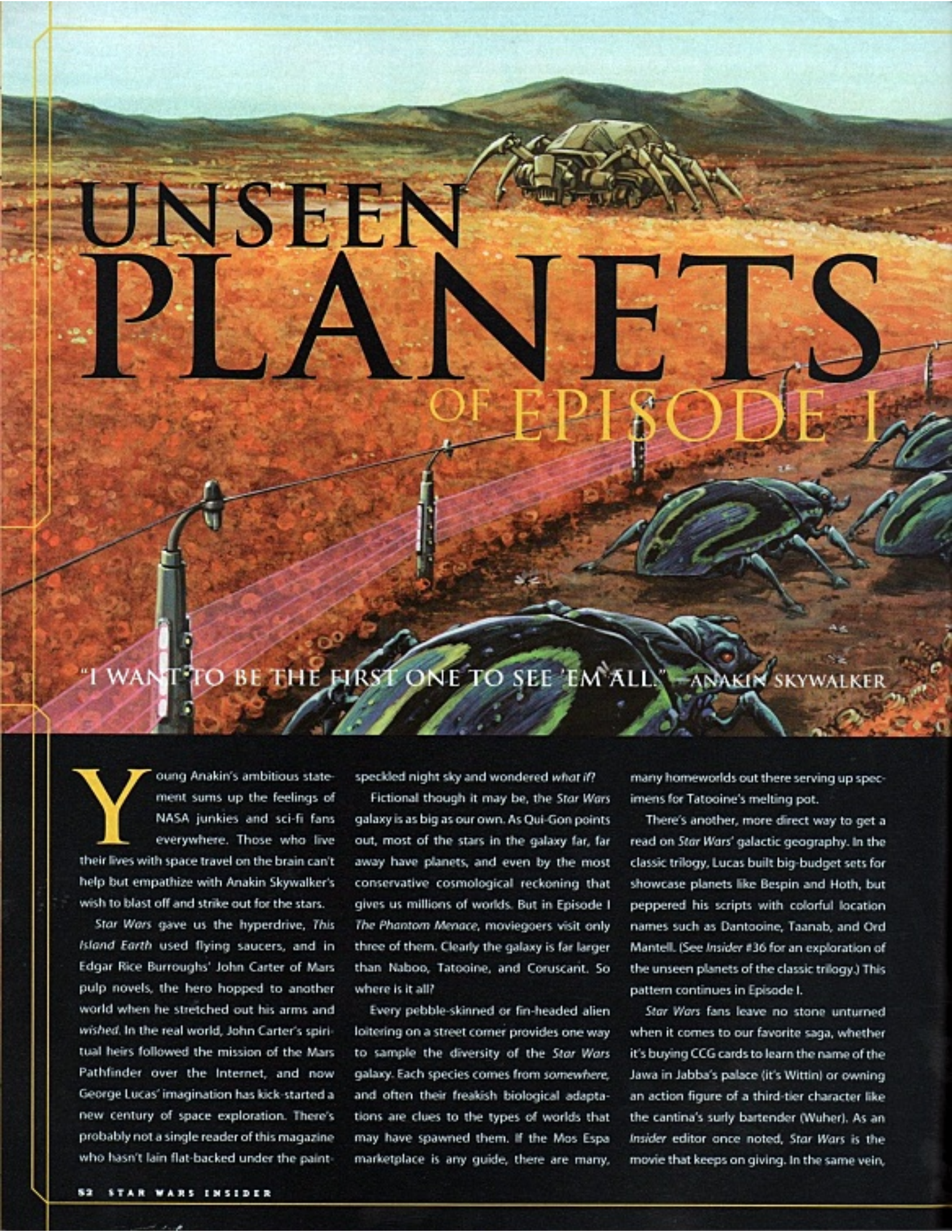
Do your suggestions get taken on board?

Yes. I think if you were to see the changes, you would see they're not to make me look better, but maybe to fill in a corner that's kind of got forgotten, or some piece of information.

So what can we expect in Episode II?

I've always been very disappointed with actors who give secrets away. Now, you can tease people, you can give them little snippets that don't mean very much. It's not a big deal to tell you I do the puppetry, therefore you realise Threepio's a puppet, but you know that anyway. I think if somebody deliberately tells you a plot line, it's as childish and silly as saying "I know a secret..." When I've had an audience and somebody's asked a question about Episode II, I've said "Do you want an answer? Hands up who wants to hear it?" Most of the audience says, "No." They don't want to hear. It's a spoiler. You can look at all these sites on the internet, and you can read them, but why spoil the movie? ☺





UNSEEN PLANETS

OF EPISODE I

"I WANT TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO SEE 'EM ALL." — ANAKIN SKYWALKER

Young Anakin's ambitious statement sums up the feelings of NASA junkies and sci-fi fans everywhere. Those who live their lives with space travel on the brain can't help but empathize with Anakin Skywalker's wish to blast off and strike out for the stars.

Star Wars gave us the hyperdrive, *This Island Earth* used flying saucers, and in Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter of Mars pulp novels, the hero hopped to another world when he stretched out his arms and wished. In the real world, John Carter's spiritual heirs followed the mission of the Mars Pathfinder over the Internet, and now George Lucas' imagination has kick-started a new century of space exploration. There's probably not a single reader of this magazine who hasn't lain flat-backed under the paint-

speckled night sky and wondered what if?

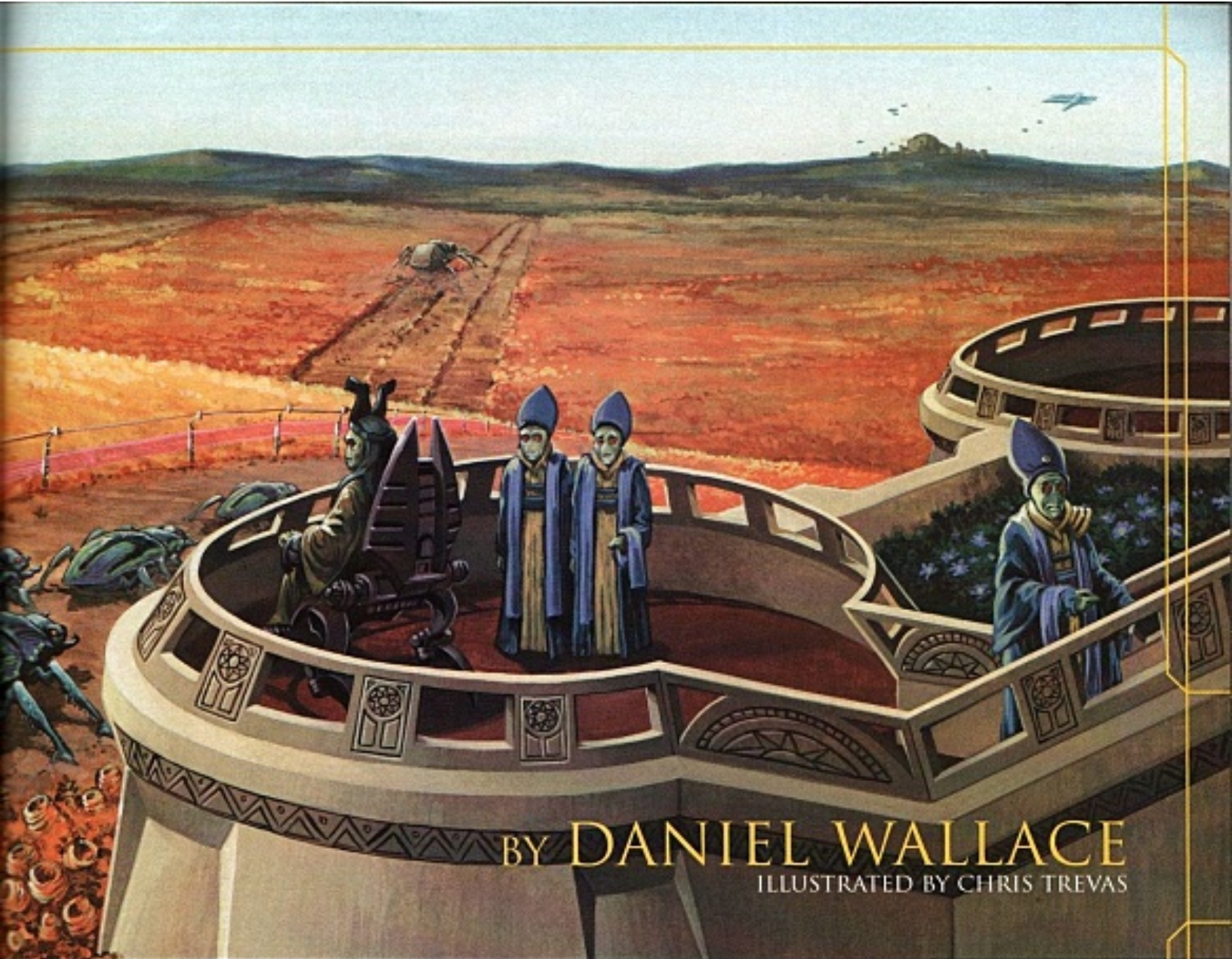
Fictional though it may be, the *Star Wars* galaxy is as big as our own. As Qui-Gon points out, most of the stars in the galaxy far, far away have planets, and even by the most conservative cosmological reckoning that gives us millions of worlds. But in Episode I *The Phantom Menace*, moviegoers visit only three of them. Clearly the galaxy is far larger than Naboo, Tatooine, and Coruscant. So where is it all?

Every pebble-skinned or fin-headed alien loitering on a street corner provides one way to sample the diversity of the *Star Wars* galaxy. Each species comes from somewhere, and often their freakish biological adaptations are clues to the types of worlds that may have spawned them. If the *Mos Espa* marketplace is any guide, there are many,

many homeworlds out there serving up specimens for Tatooine's melting pot.

There's another, more direct way to get a read on *Star Wars'* galactic geography. In the classic trilogy, Lucas built big-budget sets for showcase planets like Bespin and Hoth, but peppered his scripts with colorful location names such as Dantooine, Taanab, and Ord Mantell. (See *Insider* #36 for an exploration of the unseen planets of the classic trilogy.) This pattern continues in Episode I.

Star Wars fans leave no stone unturned when it comes to our favorite saga, whether it's buying CCG cards to learn the name of the Jawa in Jabba's palace (it's Wittin) or owning an action figure of a third-tier character like the cantina's surly bartender (Wuher). As an *Insider* editor once noted, *Star Wars* is the movie that keeps on giving. In the same vein,



BY DANIEL WALLACE
ILLUSTRATED BY CHRIS TREVAS

the unseen planets of *The Phantom Menace* add flesh to the skeleton of the core films. Even though none of these worlds will be shot against a backdrop at Fox Studios, you can still visit them through the expanded universe of novels, comics, and games.

Expanded Universe enthusiasts might already know Ord Mantell better than they know Endor. Malastare looks like the next planet in the spotlight, having made appearances in a bevy of sources aimed at readers and gamers. Other *Phantom Menace* destinations are being filled in as time permits, but already there's plenty out there to see.

So hop in Supreme Chancellor Palpatine's shuttle and lay in a course for Neimoidia. What's that? John Carter of Mars already beat us there? Hmmm... gotta tell the Chancellor about this wishing thing....

NEIMOIDIA

Turmoil has engulfed the Galactic Republic....

The yellow letters recede into the distance and the opening crawl fades from sight. Not even ten seconds elapse before a Neimoidian pops up on the screen, flickering weakly as his image frizzles on a screen-within-a-screen. The green-hided alien addressing the crew of the Republic courier is Nute Gunray, and his mannerisms convey the oiliness of a salesman about to blow the biggest deal of his career. As we soon see, Nute Gunray is in over his head.

Gunray's people populate the bridge of the massive Trade Federation Droid Control Ship; the only other beings within a square kilometer are droids. Battle droids, droid

starfighters, destroyer droids—already we see a piece of the standoffish Neimoidian psyche. Goaded by Darth Sidious into blockading Naboo, Gunray's cohorts have gotten themselves into an untenable position. As the movie unfolds we learn that the Neimoidians have been played for fools.

The Neimoidian homeworld is called, appropriately, Neimoidia, and has been visited most recently in James Luceno's pre-Episode I novel *Cloak of Deception*. A humid agricultural planet of rolling fungus farms and beetle ranches, Neimoidia is where Nute Gunray meets with his subordinates to discuss the merits of Darth Sidious' offer. Despite its beauty (if you consider iridescent mold beautiful), Neimoidia is almost devoid of Neimoidians. Most prefer to spend their lives offworld, plying goods along the galac-



The relationship between the Duros [above, top] and the Neimoidians is chronicled in *The Essential Guide to Alien Species*.

tic trade lanes and jockeying for position within the Trade Federation's bureaucracy. Even in deep space, however, Neimoidian technology evokes memories of their homeworld. Both the Trade Federation shuttlecraft and Nute Gunray's walking throne bear insectoid design touches, the better to comfort Neimoidians homesick for their giant beetles.

The Essential Guide to Alien Species explains in anthropological terms how the Neimoidians became so unpleasant. They're a genetic offshoot from the Duros species, two of whom appear in *A New Hope's* alien gathering spot. If you remember the pair of ruby-eyed Duros spacers arguing in the Mos Eisley cantina, you may also have noted subtle differences in eye color and skin tone which seemingly set the

bickerers apart from *The Phantom Menace's* timorous Neimoidians. These special divergences are attributable to twenty-five thousand years of independent adaptation, ever since a party of ancient Duros explorers left a number of colonists behind on undeveloped Neimoidia. Perhaps inspired by the life cycles of the insects on their new homeworld, the Neimoidian Duros began consigning their larval young into cutthroat grub "nurseries" where they either fended for themselves or died of starvation. Those larvae that survived to become adult Neimoidians took with them the most important rule for succeeding in business—always look out for yourself.

So great is the Trade Federation's mercantile power that it holds a seat in the Galactic Senate. Three Neimoidians, led by Senator Lott Dod, sit in the corporate conglomerate's Senate box on Coruscant. Come to think of it, Episode I's Senate scene is the perfect place to test Qui-Gon's assertion regarding the extent of planetary dispersal. Hundreds of platforms line the walls of the Senate chamber, each holding a delegation from a different region of the galaxy. With freeze frame and a jeweler's eyepiece, you can make out squid-faced Quarren from Mon Calamari, hirsute Wookiees from Kashyyyk, and a trio of E.T.s elbowing their way in from another popular sci-fi movie.

TUND

"I see Ben Quadinaros from the Tund system," said Fode, the more loquacious half of Episode I's two-headed Podrace announcer, as a monstrous mob of Mario Andretti's filed onto the racing tarmac to rowdy cheers. Upon hearing Fode's declaration over the public-address system, Ben Quadinaros stretched up to his full 1.63 meters and waved to the crowd. The lanky racer was almost all face, with legs and arms sticking straight out from his massive mug as if he were an alien Mister Potato Head.

That's a Toong for you, as Quadinaros' species has since been named in background material. In the movie we get the general sense that the Toongs are an amusing bunch, given Quadinaros' comic appearance and his frantic antics when his four-barreled Podracer fails to take off from the starting line. The unlucky Toong's machine then unhooks, its constituent parts zooming off to the north, south, east, and west. *Podracing Tales*, an online comic available for free viewing on starwars.com, reveals that Ben Quadinaros entered the race on a bet and was grossly unprepared for professional-grade competition. His malfunctioning Podracer probably saved his life.

But what about the Tund system? Unlike the other unseen planets of the *Star Wars* movies, Tund already had a history prior to the release of *The Phantom Menace*. In 1983, Del Rey published *Lando Calrissian and the Mindharp of Sharu*, *Lando Calrissian and the Flamewind of Oseon*, and *Lando Calrissian and the StarCave of ThanBoka*, three short novels by L. Neil Smith detailing the escapades of everybody's favorite card shark-cum-entrepreneur. Lando's chief nemesis throughout the series was a theatrically vengeful villain known as Rokur Gepta, the Sorcerer of Tund.

The Tund of Smith's books was a wasteland, rendered barren by Gepta's treachery.

PERHAPS INSPIRED BY THE LIFE CYCLES OF THE INSECTS ON THEIR NEW HOMEWORLD, THE NEIMOIDIAN DUROS BEGAN CONSIGNING THEIR LARVAL YOUNG INTO CUTTHROAT GRUB "NURSERIES" WHERE THEY EITHER FENDED FOR THEMSELVES OR DIED OF STARVATION.



Ben Quadinaros waves to the fans attending the Bounty Eve Podrace. Unfortunately, his performance left much to be desired.

Turns out the villain wasn't a true Sorcerer at all, merely a spellcasting snail with delusions of grandeur. After infiltrating the Sorcerers' ranks and learning their dark side magic, Gepta (a tiny alien Croke) annihilated them all with a weapon of mass destruction. The planet Tund endured as a whispered enigma, a vast mausoleum for a vanished order of warlocks.

The Toong fled their homeworld, which was ravaged by a weapon of mass destruction. They found peace and happiness, for the most part, on Tund.

Clearly, Ben Quadinaros is no Sorcerer. What, then, is his connection to Tund? The Toong homeworld of Toong'I is a neighbor to Tund on Lucasfilm's galactic maps, and most Toongs are refugees following an environmental disaster that befell their beloved Toong'I. It's reasonable to assume that many Toongs, including Ben Quadinaros, sought safe harbor on nearby Tund. After all, at that point in the timeline—thirty-odd years before the events of the Lando Calrissian adventures—the Sorcerers' planet would have still been lush and green.

So did George Lucas include Tund in his script based on Smith's novels, or is it merely a phonetic coincidence? Or did he select the name after a casual flip through the *Star Wars Encyclopedia*? Regardless of the source, the inclusion of Tund in Episode I is a fun reference for trivia-savvy fans to spot.

MALASTARE

Of all the unseen planets in *The Phantom Menace*, Malastare comes the closest to being a no-brainer. It's unusual in that it's men-

tioned no less than three times by characters in the film, so frequently that it's possible to piece together a general description of the planet from movie dialogue alone.

First, Qui-Gon Jinn mentioned it when the dinner conversation at Shmi Skywalker's table turned to Podracing. Qui-Gon offered up his opinion on the subject when he said, "They have Podracing on Malastare. Very fast, very dangerous."

Second, Malastare was among the many worlds represented in the Galactic Senate chamber on Coruscant. When Queen Amidala and Trade Federation senator Lott Dod got into a shouting match over the invasion of Naboo, Malastare representative Aks Moe and his two confederates (all of them triple-eyed Gran) detached their box from its place amid the Wookiees and E.T.s and sailed into the center of the room. "The Congress of Malastare concurs with the honorable delegate from the Trade Federation," bleated Aks Moe. "A commission must be appointed."



Malastare representative Aks Moe prompts Chancellor Valorum to appoint a commission to investigate Queen Amidala's claims.

The third reference came shortly after the Senate scene. Senator Palpatine and Captain Panaka, decked out in smiles, walked in on Queen Amidala with the ostensibly good news of Palpatine's nomination for the office of Supreme Chancellor. Palpatine began prattling on about his modesty and his mandate for smashing corruption, but the Queen





Podracing is all the rage on Malastare, which boasts at least three renown tracks. The Gran tend to enjoy them more than their slaves, the Dugs.

cut him off with an abrupt "Who else has been nominated?" Panaka's response, "Bail Antilles of Alderaan and Ainlee Teem of Malastare," was academic. By the end of the film it was clear that neither the Alderaanian nor the Malastarian had had any chance against Palpatine.

That rounds out the Malastare references in Episode I. But there was also a fourth reference—the lost reference—which appeared in an early script draft. If you listen carefully to the Podracing announcements, you'll hear

Beed (the announcer's Huttese-speaking head) hail reigning champ Sebulba the Dug as "Woe grane champio du Pixelito—Sebulba!" But in an earlier version of this scene Jabba the Hutt handled the introductions, announcing in his native tongue "Anakin Skywalker tuta Tatooine" and "Sebulba tuta Malastare."

That early identification of Sebulba as a Malastare native—though it was modified in the final film as seen above—made it into print in the *Episode I Visual Dictionary*, which wrote "Sebulba is an arboreal Dug from

Malastare. Swinging from tree to tree on this high-gravity planet has made Dugs strong and well coordinated." Naturally, an alert reader might get confused as to Sebulba's point of origin, but fortunately the LucasArts CD-ROM *The Insider's Guide to Episode I* laid the matter to rest. Sebulba was a Dug from the city of Pixelito, a busy metropolis located on the planet of Malastare. (Interestingly, Pixelito can be read as "little pixel" in Spanish. Could this be a nod to Sebulba's life as an ILM computer sprite?)

PODRACING AND POLITICS, GRAN AND DUGS, WASTELANDS AND FORESTS... FANS ACCUSTOMED TO PLANETS THAT COULD BE SUMMED UP IN A SINGLE WORD (SNOW, SAND, SWAMP) COULD BE FORGIVEN FOR ASKING, "WILL THE REAL MALASTARE PLEASE STAND UP?"

Around the same time as *The Insider's Guide to Episode I*, LucasArts also released *Episode I Racer*, a white-knuckled video game for those who like their adrenaline served straight up. This interactive Podracing competition took place on dozens of tracks across the galaxy, including three blistering courses on Malastare. In between the jumps and the zigzags, it was possible to catch a glimpse of the scenery, and this Malastare was portrayed as a barren landscape of precariously tilted rock formations. Beneath a muddy sky, dragonflies the size of helicopters buzzed above green pools of liquid methane.

Podracing and politics, Gran and Dugs, wastelands and forests... fans accustomed to planets that could be summed up in a single word (snow, sand, swamp) could be forgiven for asking, "Will the real Malastare please stand up?" In Dark Horse Comics' ongoing *Star Wars* series, writer Tim Truman finally took the pieces, threw them all into a mold, and allowed them to gel. We got to visit Sebulba's hometown of Pixelito. The six-part "Emissaries to Malastare" story arc followed Mace Windu and other members of the Jedi Council to Malastare, where they hoped to mediate a dispute between politicians and terrorists. The corrupt Gran officials in Pixelito treated the native Dugs like slaves, taking time out to watch the Podraces as the flying hotrods tore right through the center of town. (Very fast, very dangerous, indeed.) The art portrayed a varied terrain incorporating both flat rocks and creeping greenery.

The Essential Guide to Alien Species added a few more details to life on Malastare. The entries on the Gran and the Dugs explain how the former colonized the latter's planet, leading to inter-species conflict and a "have/have not" inequity that allows the Gran to represent Malastare exclusively in the Galactic Senate. The book also gives insight into Dug superstitions and hints at a past war between the Dugs and a neighboring species known as the ZeHethbra.



Sebulba is unlike most Dugs because of his podracing expertise. He's a slave to no one.

IEGO

"Are you an angel?" Sure, it looks like a good pickup line, but unless it's delivered with the sincerity of a nine-year old child it'll probably fall as flat as "Do you come here often?"

Regardless, it worked for Anakin. Asking the question of Padmé upon his first sight of her, Anakin elicited an amused "what?" from the disguised Queen, who seemed simultaneously flattered and taken aback that a boy so young could be so forward. Anakin clarified, explaining that angels were the most beautiful creatures in the universe and lived on the Moons of Iego. "...I think."

The geography lesson ends there in the movie, but here's Anakin's expanded dialogue from the Episode I novelization: "They are good and kind, and so pretty they make even the most hardened spice pirates cry like small children."

While Anakin's anecdote could be a literal description of a *Star Wars* species, his qualification of the tale as coming from the lips of deep-space pilots implies that it's a legend, embellished over the generations by countless lonely starfarers. In our own history, mariners traversing the Atlantic mistook man-

atees for mermaids, making one wonder if every Spanish caravel couldn't have used a shipboard optometrist. In the special-edition comic book *Episode I Wizard Special #1/2*, we catch a glimpse of the star pilot who's been filling Anakin's head with such stories—a gruff old salt who looks fond of spinning tall tales.

Though the angels are described as good and kind, there's something sinister about entities with the bewitching power to make spacers weep. In fact, the angels of Iego bring to mind the Sirens of Anthemoessa, who in Greek mythology inhabited a remote island between Sicily and Italy. The Sirens—half bird, half woman—would sing songs so enchanting that passing sailors would lose their wits, steering their vessels into the rocks where the Sirens could feast on the shipwreck survivors. Sun-bleached bones soon littered the island of the Sirens, and the seductive creatures hollowed them into woodwinds to provide instrumental accompaniment for their mesmerizing music.

Flying between the moons of Iego sounds like the high-tech equivalent of steering around the rocks of Anthemoessa. If the angels are dangerous, *Star Wars* spacers would do well to remember the tale of Odysseus. Captain Odysseus ordered his crew to pack their ears with beeswax, then to tie him to the ship's mast so he could endure the Sirens' song and signal the others when it was safe to remove their earplugs. Upon seeing their clever prey escape their trap, the Sirens of Anthemoessa cast themselves into the sea and drowned.

Lying far out beyond the Outer Rim, Iego will likely remain a half-mythical place filled with exotic wonders. Whether the angels of Iego have a direct parallel with Odysseus' Sirens is open to debate, but you have to hope that they aren't too malevolent. After all, when Padmé tells Anakin she's never heard of angels in the Episode I novelization, he replies with, "You must be one. Maybe you just don't know it." ☺

THOUGH DESCRIBED AS GOOD AND KIND, THERE'S SOMETHING SINISTER ABOUT ENTITIES WITH THE BEWITCHING POWER TO MAKE SPACERS WEEP.

TROY AND TROY AGAIN

BY JASON FRY

AN ORIGINAL EXPANDED UNIVERSE AUTHOR RETURNS TO THE FOLD

The saga that is *Star Wars: The New Jedi Order* is made for the collaborative writer. The series has demanded that each writer work closely not only with Del Rey and Lucasfilm, but also with the other writers crafting their pieces of the larger story.

Not to worry, though: Troy Denning loves working in such a collaborative environment. The author of the latest book in the series, the sprawling *Star Wars: The New Jedi Order—Star By Star* (Del Rey, \$26), Denning says that “one of the things that has made this whole project just a dream is there are so many creative and talented people involved.”

Take the meeting at Skywalker Ranch where Denning and his fellow authors James Luceno and Matt Stover sat down with Del Rey editorial director Shelly Shapiro and Lucasfilm’s editor, Sue Rostoni to kick around ideas for where the saga should go next—a productive day that Denning calls “the rare case where design by committee really works.” Then there were the calls and e-mails exchanged by Denning and Greg Keyes—whose books *Conquest* and *Rebirth* preceded *Star By Star*—as they worked to hammer out the character of Anakin Solo. “I would be hard-pressed to say, ‘This is Greg’s part of Anakin and this is my part,’” Denning says. And there’s the way Denning was able to rely on authors who came before—such as *Balance Point*’s Kathy Tyers and the *Young Jedi Knights* creators Kevin J. Anderson and Rebecca Moesta—to get a better understanding of *Star By Star*’s lengthy cast of characters.

Those characters certainly have plenty to do in Denning’s hands. New parents Luke Skywalker and Mara Jade Skywalker take up

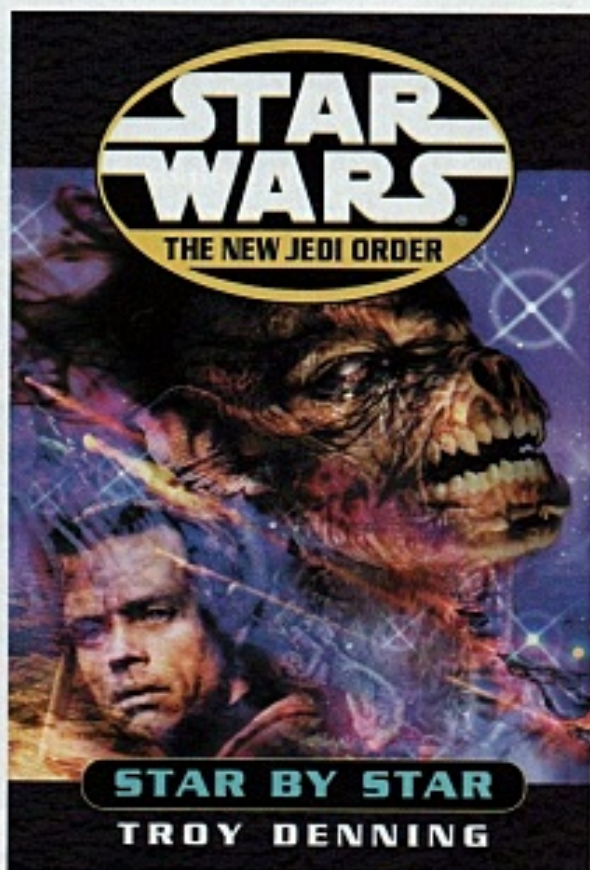
arms against the Yuuzhan Vong, and Han Solo and Leia Organa Solo are entangled in galactic politics as the Senate quarrels over how to answer the extragalactic threat. But the heart of *Star By Star* involves a dangerous mission behind enemy lines to find the origin of the voxyn, a ferocious species of clones bred by the Vong to hunt down and destroy users of the Force. Young Anakin Solo leads that mission, joined by his sister and brother and a group of Jedi Knights that includes such familiar names as Tenel Ka, Raynar Thul and Zekk.

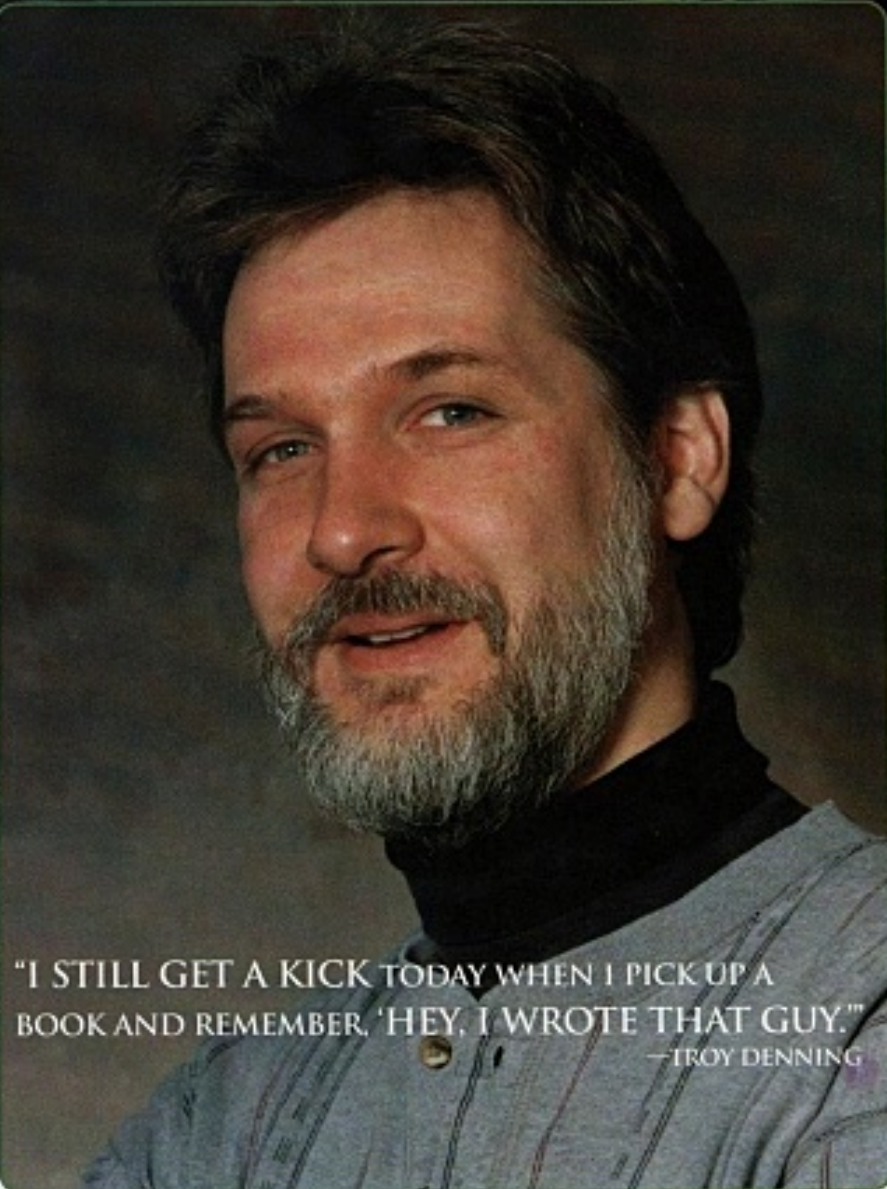
Using the characters from the *Young Jedi Knights* series, Denning says, came at the suggestion of Shelly Shapiro. Denning hit the books and quickly became a fan: “One of the really pleasant surprises I had was to find out how interesting these characters really were.”

Denning offers a tip of the hat to the work of Anderson and Moesta, noting that “by the end of the series I really thought I knew these kids.” He also found he liked them—to the extent that he invented some characters of his own to join the strike team. If that seems like a odd way to pay tribute, allow Denning to explain: From his first days working on *Star*

By Star, he says, he knew that the storyline was “going to be a pretty darn bloody one...[with] people going out of the story forever.” (And to avoid giving away too much, that’s all that can be said.)

Denning’s background made him a logical choice for the New Jedi Order: He’s written a number of books, many of them for TSR Hobbies, in which he started with an outline of the action and made the book his own by filling in the blanks. The key to such stories, he says, is the characters. Once Denning has read up on the story’s important characters, he sits down and asks himself a series of





"I STILL GET A KICK TODAY WHEN I PICK UP A BOOK AND REMEMBER, 'HEY, I WROTE THAT GUY.'"
—TROY DENNING

questions about each person: What do they want? Why do they want it? What are they willing to do to get it? What won't they do?

Once the parameters of the story are set, Denning says, the characters really drive the action—which advances in part because he can "let them do what they would do." For instance, Denning says he never planned any of the light moments in *Star By Star*: "I'd just be writing along and [the characters would] be on the page and I'd be laughing. That's why you write in the first place."

Denning has been writing since his youth; TSR published his first book, the *Forgotten Realms* novel *Waterdeep*, in 1989. (It's credited to Richard Awlinson.) That experience wasn't unlike the *New Jedi Order*, he notes: The storyline was carefully choreographed, and each book in the trilogy was assigned to

a different writer. *Dungeons & Dragons* lies in Denning's future as well: He's in the middle of a new trilogy, *The Return of the Arch-Wizards*, with the second book set for release a couple of months after *Star By Star*.

As for returning to the *Star Wars* universe with a future novel, Denning says he'd be thrilled. He's been a fan since 1977—and vividly recalls the day George Lucas's saga became part of his life.

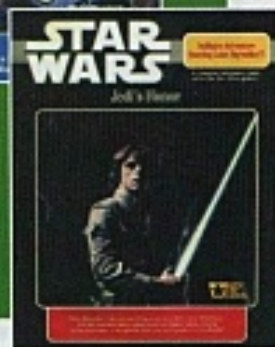
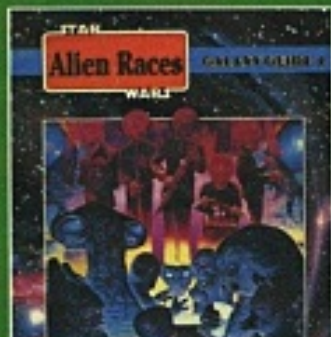
Denning had just graduated from high school in his home town of Idaho Springs, Colo., when *Star Wars* hit the screen. Because Idaho Springs was a little town far from most theaters, Denning and some of his friends made the long trip to Denver one day to see *Star Wars*—only to find many, many other people had had the same idea. "I'm not kid-

DENNING'S BACK PAGES

Troy Denning may be a new name in *Star Wars* novels, but back in his freelance-writing days he helped establish some of the basic information that's underpinned hundreds of *Star Wars* stories. Denning wrote the first edition of West End Games' *Galaxy Guide 4: Alien Races* (1989), in which he made up backgrounds for a number of the characters in the Mos Eisley cantina and got to coin names for such ubiquitous species as the Rodians and Borebels.

He also wrote *Scoundrel's Luck* and *Jedi's Honor*, a pair of choose-your-own-adventure books for West End Games that remain cult favorites among *Star Wars* fans. *Scoundrel's Luck* is essential reading, offering a razor-sharp portrait of Han Solo and a rollicking story that wraps Han, Leia, a cast of Imperial deserters and Darth Vader's crippled TIE fighter (complete with hibernating Sith Lord) into one of the many versions of what happened with "the bounty hunter we ran into on Ord Mantell." (Denning also wrote "pick-a-path" adventures for Leia and Lando Calrissian that, alas, were never published.)

"I kind of feel sometimes guilty about it," he says of *Galaxy Guide 4*. "I got to have so much fun and lay...the foundations for some of what happens in the galaxy by myself...I still get a kick today when I pick up a book and remember, 'Hey, I wrote that guy.'"



ding you, there were more people in line than lived in our whole town," he recalls. The friends waited in line for the earliest tickets they could get and didn't make it home until midnight—which left them trying to explain to suspicious parents that, yes, they really had spent 12 hours going to see a movie.

"It was jaw-dropping," Denning says. "It was like, 'When are we going to see it again?'"

TAKE YOUR SEAT ON THE SENATE

CORUSCANT: THE WORLD OF POLITICS ENTERS THE STAR WARS CUSTOMIZABLE CARD GAME

BY JOE ALREAD
DECIPHER GAME DESIGNER

With over 2,000 cards to play with, the *Star Wars* CCG can be intimidating to the casual player looking to get back into the game. You might have a killer tournament deck, only to have it destroyed by some card you've never even seen before, and that's no fun.

That's why Decipher developed the Episode I stand-alone environment. Now the casual gamer who doesn't plan on spending his weekends memorizing hundreds of cards can still get in on the action. With the release of the Coruscant expansion set, this closed environment is now fully playable and extremely easy to learn. If you total the number of cards you can use in this environment, you'll find that there are only about 240, a much more manageable sum.

The cards you can play in the Episode I environment appear in the Tatooine and Coruscant expansion sets released this past summer. Most of the cards in these sets have the Episode I icon in the upper-right hand corner—these are the only cards permitted in the closed environment.

POWER OF AUTHORITY

While Tatooine focuses on Podracing and other events that occurred on the desert planet in Episode I, Coruscant adds political infighting to the environment. By controlling the Galactic Senate, you can essentially "vote in" a variety of game bonuses to help defeat your opponent. From adding to battle destinies to canceling Force drains, you can choose the bonuses that help your deck the most. Each Senator has his own unique ability that he grants to you when he has the "Senate majority".

You have a senate majority when you have more Politics in the Galactic Senate than your opponent. Along with the Senator abilities that are available, a new card type—the Political Effect—can give you powerful, Interrupt-like bonuses. By placing your Senator on the desired Political Effect, you get the appropriate



bonus, thus simulating your senators 'voting' for something advantageous to you in the course of a game.

It didn't make much design sense to have politicians slugging it out, or for Vader slashing them left and right with his lightsaber. The new statistic Politics takes the place of Power in the Galactic Senate. Not only is this statistic used to determine winners and losers in battle; it also determines which player has the senate majority.



The objectives My Lord, Is That Legal? and Plead My Case To The Senate allow you to take advantage of Politics. The player with the highest total Politics in the Galactic Senate has a senate majority, which allows that player to use other cards' game text to great effect. Political Effects give you the ability to nullify these decks' weak points. Which benefits of the Senate will work for you?

THE COUNCIL SPEAKS

Along with the Senate, the prestigious Jedi Council makes its first appearance as well. The Jedi Council Chamber is the first



IF YOU TOTAL THE NUMBER OF CARDS YOU CAN USE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, YOU'LL FIND THAT THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 240, A MUCH MORE MANAGEABLE SUM.

site ever to give the Light Side three Force icons, and is a great starting site with Plead My Case To The Senate. The Council Chamber lets you deploy Yoda from your Reserve Deck, and from there Yoda allows you to direct Jedi to all corners of the galaxy, wherever they may be needed. Each Council member has unique battling capabilities. With the extra Force generation each Jedi Master gives you, they are a force to be reckoned with.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS ON TATOOINE

Qui-Gon's negotiations with Watto on Tatooine helped map out the fate of the galaxy, and No Money, No Parts, No Deal! and The Hyperdrive's Gone are two objectives that revolve around those dealings. Watto has quite a reputation as a hard dealer; this Dark Side objective makes your opponent pay to deploy your cards. How's that for a deal?

Light Side isn't going to just let Watto have his way. When Qui-Gon Jinn needs a hyperdrive, he makes sure Watto doesn't take advantage of him—or of any of his friends either. Whenever you initiate a Force drain or win a battle at Watto's Workshop, it brings you one step closer to flipping your objective. Once flipped, your opponent loses 1 Force each of your turns for every battleground site you occupy with a Senator.

"MASTER, DESTROYERS!"

But if you're not looking for sleazy politics and petty debates, you can throw some hard-nosed battle cards into the mix as well. Perhaps the most notable are the Destroyer Droid squad leaders, P-59 and P-60, and the non-unique, generic Destroyer Droid. The Destroyer Droid is the first non-unique character equipped with a permanent weapon; not only is it able to hit characters with its permanent weapon, but the opponent loses Force whenever one of your Destroyer Droid scores a hit! A permanent weapon, direct damage, and a battle destiny: These guys could be the best non-unique character ever! P-59 and P-60, the unique Destroyers, get even better. These two have bonuses to their weapon destiny draws and cause even more Force loss when they hit. Don't be surprised if players try to get their hands on as many Destroyer Droids as they can.

PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

For experienced players, new open environment cards are included to balance older deck types and bolster other, weaker strategies. More combo cards (first introduced in the Reflections II expansion set earlier this year) allow open environment players to defend against different deck types with a single card. Rebel and Imperial Artillery bring older, less powerful weapons back into top-tier decks once again. In the past, only lightsabers increased Force drains. Rebel and Imperial Artillery not only inflict Force loss on your opponent, they recycle a 7-destiny card as well!

After you've mastered the 240 card closed environment, the Theed Palace expansion set will bring you a whole new world of possibilities. Theed Palace releases this fall, just in time for Deciphercon (November 15th–18th in Virginia Beach, VA).



THE PALACE OF JABBA THE HUTT

BY CHRIS REIFF
& CHRIS TREVAS

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE STANDING OR YOU'RE LIABLE TO BECOME THE EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT.

For *Return of the Jedi*, Stage Six at Elstree Studios (also known as the "Star Wars stage") was once again transformed into multiple otherworldly locations. One of the sets that dominated the massive stage was the palace of Jabba the Hutt.

The palace interior and throne room was a completely enclosed set with several alcoves, doorways, and blind alleys contained within the four walls. To accommodate all the puppeteers and creature handlers needed, the crew built the entire set six feet off the stage floor. This doubled the cost of the set's construction. People were hidden under the floor, in the ceiling and behind hollow walls to control the alien menagerie. The band's lead singer, Sy Snootles, required three operators, two under the floor and one high above using marionette strings.

Jabba himself was the most complicated creature of all, taking three months to complete. Three men operated the crime lord from inside his 18-foot long latex form. One moved the tail while the other two controlled his arms and head movement. Jabba also required other operators for his facial expres-

sions and eye movement. The huge slug was treated like a pampered star on set with his own full time make-up person as well.

Other aliens in Jabba's entourage also required help from the crew. Temperatures on the palace set often reached 100 degrees under the studio lights. Heat exhaustion was a constant threat to the actors under the layers of rubber and cloth. Between takes, cool air was pumped into the creature masks with hairdryers. Gamorrean guards had to prop their mouths open with sticks in order to breathe.

Even though it wasn't really Tatooine, the heat was quite real filming on Stage Six at Elstree Studios. Jabba the Hutt was still an imposing figure, but there was no threat of being fed to his pet rancor. If you did fall through a trap door in the floor, the puppeteers underneath provided a soft cushion for landing! ☺



To feed large crowds and Jabba himself, the palace chef prepares barbecue Bantoe on this spit.



On the far wall behind the band hung the frozen carbonite slab containing Han Solo, but just to the left of Solo is another large prop from *The Empire Strikes Back*. A Tauntaun head was mounted on the wall like a hunting trophy.



Jabba's vibro-ax weapon was made by ILM from numerous parts including a hairdryer, a toy Star Wars gun and a garden watering device assembled onto a length of plumbing pipe.



Luke manages to get one shot at Jabba with this blaster before falling into the rancor pit. These sidearm props, common among Jabba's crew, were dressed-up German air pistols that could fire only tiny pellets instead of searing blaster bolts.



Chewbacca's bandolier contains several metal boxes commonly used for small home built electronics projects.

Jabba's food bowl was filled with exotic-looking rubber creatures. In some close-ups, a live frog was added for movement.

ILM designed and built Princess Leia's bounty hunter disguise. It was detailed by a process called "kit-bashing" using pieces from various plastic model kits including Darth Vader's TIE fighter and a large scale Ferrari Formula 1 car.



The Rodians in Jabba's palace wear vests first worn by Princess Leia and other Rebel personnel on Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*. They were dyed orange for reuse in *Return of the Jedi*.



HELP CELEBRATE A SCOUTING ANNIVERSARY!

BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO POWER DOWN THOSE BATTERIES
AND NOT INVEST IN VINYL BANNERS
OR "RARE" YODA FIGURES

BY STEVE SANSWEET

Looking at the cool Special Edition 300th Figure Boba Fett on the left side of my desk, propped up atop my scanner, I got to thinking. We really are a society obsessed with "special" numbers. I had talked to the Hasbro team when they were developing this baby (there was very little doubt it would be our favorite bounty hunter, finally with a rocket-firing backpack) and we talked about the whole issue of milestones and how important it was to select the right figures to define numbers One, 100, and 200, because cases could be made for a number of figures released around the same time.

But the Hasbro team let the Force flow through it and scored. No. 1 was 1978's original Luke Skywalker. No. 100 was Han Solo in Carbonite from 1985 and No. 200 was the extended universe's Mara Jade from 1998.

My friend Les just picked up his Luke Skywalker Action Collection 100th Figure. Now this is the toy I always wanted as a kid. Twelve inches or so high, nicely sculpted, it

cream and cherry on this sundae.

All of this got me thinking about another number. I realized I hadn't the foggiest notion of how many *Scouting the Galaxy* columns I had written over the years. Maybe I should be celebrating some sort of anniversary. So I got out my *Insider* file copies, blew off the dust, and lo and behold, who should be staring at me from the cover of Issue #21 of the *Lucasfilm Fan Club Magazine* but none other than Mr. Icon himself, Boba Fett. Some things never change.

This was the Winter 1994 issue of a magazine that was still quarterly, and still had the name it took when it acquired the license from Lucasfilm in 1987. It didn't become *Star Wars Insider*, a name I'm proud to say I suggested to Lucas Licensing's Lucy Wilson and that stuck, until issue #23. By that time, the prequels and Special Edition (of at least *Star Wars*) had been announced.



comes with two outfits and a passel of accessories. You want Luke farm boy? Jedi trainee? X-wing pilot? Seeker of droids, seeker of truth? You got it! And the pop-out front packaging panels are the whipped



IS THAT A ROCKET IN YOUR
BACKPACK, OR ARE YOU JUST
HAPPY TO SEE ME?

The Special Edition 300th Figure Boba Fett, complete with a firing rocket.

Scouting the Galaxy

Collecting Star Wars Memorabilia

By Thomas J. Tumbusch

"Y... You're kidding, right?" I remember the first time I saw a Star Wars action figure. It was in a store in my hometown, and I was looking at the shelves. I saw a bunch of figures, and I was like, "What are those?"



Star Wars action figures are a popular collectible.



Star Wars action figures are a popular collectible.



Star Wars action figures are a popular collectible.

The first column covered nearly two pages (give or take a Young Indy cartoon) and covered the waterfront of Star Wars collecting, focusing mainly on action figures. My first book (*Star Wars: From Concept to Screen to Collectible*) had been out a couple of years, but the book that really showed how much there really was to collect (*Tamart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles*) that I did with T.N. Tumbusch was still a few months from publication. The column also had a small sidebar, Galactic Sightings, on the small amount of new merchandise being released.

There was also a plea for letters about collectibles, which, of course, has become the backbone of the column. I've gotten several thousand of them over the past six-plus years—but more are good, so keep 'em coming.

And the anniversary? Well, if your math skills are sharp, you probably figure that I missed it by an issue. Actually, Scouting took a hiatus for one issue in 1999 to allow for additional coverage of Star Wars Celebration, so this indeed is the 35th "Scouting the Galaxy" column since the start of 1994. To celebrate, I think I'll rip open the 100th Luke box.... Les's.

Galactic Sightings

Star Wars action figures are a popular collectible. The first column covered nearly two pages (give or take a Young Indy cartoon) and covered the waterfront of Star Wars collecting, focusing mainly on action figures. My first book (*Star Wars: From Concept to Screen to Collectible*) had been out a couple of years, but the book that really showed how much there really was to collect (*Tamart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles*) that I did with T.N. Tumbusch was still a few months from publication. The column also had a small sidebar, Galactic Sightings, on the small amount of new merchandise being released.



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PEERING INSIDE THE DEATH STAR AND OTHER THRILLS

I was given a package of blueprints by a friend of mine years ago that I originally thought were of ships, but when I opened the vinyl envelope I found that they were actually set blueprints from *A New Hope* including specs for the Death Star hallways and control rooms, detention cell, as well as several other sets from the movie. I have found no records of this item in any collector's magazine or books. Do you have any information? Also, are there any other set blueprints from the other movies?

DOMINIC PELLETIER
via the Internet

Hey Dom, I think you have an incomplete set. First published by Ballantine Books in November 1977 at \$6.95 (today's price still a reason-

able \$20 or so), this innovative batch of 15 fold-out sheets did include five sheets for Death Star sections like the tractor beam generator. It also

THE STAR WARS スター・ウォーズ デッサン&宇宙設計図



BANDAI



included actual production set drawings for the Millennium Falcon, Luke's Sky-hopper, several landspeeders, the Cantina interior, sandcrawler tread detail, and R2-D2. Japan's Bandai published a version packaging five of the blueprints with Joe Johnston's *Star Wars Sketchbook* in a clear vinyl package in June 1978 (then about \$7.50; today about \$50 mint). In 1994 *Starlog* published three special magazine-like volumes by Shane Johnson doing an in-fantasy version of the blueprints—that is, treating the *Star Wars* galaxy as if it were real. These were consolidated and published in the U.S. the following year by Del Rey as the *Star Wars Technical Journal* (still in print at \$35). Information on all of these and more can be found on page 30 of the previously mentioned second edition of the Tomart's *Star Wars Price Guide*.

An even more sophisticated approach—although more cross-section than blueprint—can be found in the recent series of brilliantly done Dorling Kindersley books on the vehicles and places of the *Star Wars* galaxy.

OPENING THE UNOPENABLE

In the past few years there has been a growing selection of electronic *Star Wars* toys that feature voices and sound effects from the



movies. Since the release of Episode I, it's become common to find increasingly elaborate items like the dancing Jar Jar Binks, lightsaber wielding talking banks, ships with laser-tag technology and *Star Wars* alarm clocks that do everything but serve breakfast. Many of these come equipped with small batteries so that the prospective buyer can sample their special features right at the store with easily accessed "Try Me" button.

Is it advisable—strictly from a collectible standpoint—to open these toys and remove the batteries over time to avoid possible leakage and damage to the collectible, or is it more important to the value of these items to keep them sealed in their original unopened packages?

TOM SCHAEFER
Mountain Home, AR

I usually test [my 12-inch] electronic figures every few months to make sure the batteries still work. Eventually, I will have to replace the batteries in them. Currently they are mint, sealed. How should I open them? Top? Bottom? Other collectors say that breaking the tape will diminish

the value by at least 10%. If that's true, it's a Catch 22. You have to open the boxes to replace the batteries, but then the value drops for the figure. How long can those batteries last?

SCOTT M. SIDNER
Johnstown, OH

Excellent questions, Tom and Scott, and ones I haven't fully worked out an answer for myself yet, so I'd love to hear how other collectors are dealing with it. Here's my preliminary assessment, however. I've collected battery-operated tin toys for a while, so I know how battery acid from a leaking battery can ruin a toy. It ain't a pretty sight. On the other hand, many of today's *Star Wars* toys get their juice from tiny hearing-aid size batteries that will go dead after a couple of years but are less likely to gum up the works.

I guess one beginning rule of thumb for me is that if the toy is blister pack-welded onto its card and you aren't planning to play with it, and changing batteries means destroying the package (and the package is nicer-looking than the toy), I'd leave it alone and let the battery die. It's probably a fairly inexpensive piece anyway.

But on the more expensive alarm systems, clocks, high-end watches, and yes, even those 12-inch talking figures, I'd eventually replace or remove the batteries. I think in most cases you have three or four years depending on usage, although the manufacturer would probably say one or two. Most definitely open the package carefully, from the place it will be seen the least, using a product like un-du or another adhesive remover to take off tape rather than cut it. And Scott, I'll never believe that your once-opened, neatly boxed, working electronic talking Maul is worth



less than someone else's sealed but non-talking one.

TALKING NEWBIE

Hill I love Star Wars. Unfortunately, I just got into it a few years ago. My collection is pretty big, but it's mostly recent toys. Do you have any tips about how to get older stuff—besides the Internet, because I don't have a computer yet.

JAMI TELGREN

Mt. Pleasant, IA

Well, I'm scratching my head trying to remember those wild and woolly days before you could sit down in front of your computer monitor, call up eBay, and get up with a headache and a severely depleted checking account four hours later. Try yard, garage, or estate sales. Subscribe to Toy Shop, a twice-a-month tabloid filled with ads from dealers of all kinds, many of whom carry vintage Star Wars toys (call 800-258-0929) and then get on any mailing lists the dealers may have. Go to the dealer's room at a big sci-fi/media convention. If you don't have a personal computer, try logging on at your town's library or



even your school's library after hours...and head straight for eBay. Happy hunting!

A SHADOW OF A DEAL

A couple of years ago I purchased an Episode I promotional poster from this magazine's Jawa Trader. It has Anakin Skywalker walking the sands of Tatooine with Darth Vader's shadow behind him. The poster is a huge vinyl one that hung in movie theaters. I remember being told that there were around 500 or so made. I never took it out of the box and was wondering how much it is worth.

KENNY NOIA

Fremont, CA

This large vinyl "teaser" banner was distributed to only a few hundred theaters in North America in the fall of 1998. A few dozen went to Lucasfilm for internal use. And 500 of the four-foot by eight-foot displays were made available to the Fan Club for sale at \$149.95 at a limit of one per customer. They sold out very quickly. And frenzied fans who got shut out started bidding up the price to get one. Then a funny thing happened—or not so funny if you bought one strictly for speculation. The price started dropping... dropping... dropping...until it passed below the original retail price of \$150. Today sellers are lucky to get near \$100 for one in mint condition. Who knows why? I think this is one of the coolest promotional visuals to come from the saga, there are only about 700 of them in existence, and they tie the entire story together. My guess is that their day will come again...but timing is everything.

TRUE VARIATION

Recently I bought a Yoda action figure from the Episode I line. I notice all it said was Star Wars, but no Episode I above the plastic bubble covering the figure like all the other figure packages. Is this a mess-up or was it made this way on purpose?

MITCHELL CHICHA

Spokane, WA

What a polite, well-mannered young man you are, Mitchell. "Mess-up," you say. Others would say, uhm, other things. For some



inexplicable reason, the figure of the diminutive Jedi Master made it through all of the checks and balances at Hasbro without anyone catching the fact that the EPISODE I tagline present on every other action figure under the STAR WARS logo had somehow slipped into oblivion. At first Hasbro officials said they weren't going to issue a revised card, but late in the run a relatively small number of corrected Yoda cards appeared. That hasn't stopped some eBay dealers from proclaiming the far more common cards without EPISODE I as "rare" and putting a premium price on them. That figure has been marked down to \$1.97 or even less at some retailers. A Yoda with EPISODE I under the logo goes for about \$20 or more. I consider it a true variation. ☺

SCOUTING FOR ANSWERS?

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to: SCOUTING THE GALAXY, P.O. Box 2898, Petaluma, CA 94953-2898. OR you may email them to swinsider@wizards.com, making sure to put SCOUTING in the subject line. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense, and length.

EPISODE I



DEAR 2-1B

ADVICE FOR HUMANS

Illustration by Stan Shaw

Before we get to the letters, I'm going to start off by saying that my hydraulic liquids are boiling and I'm not going to take it anymore. Yet despite the never-ending conveyor belt of obstacles and insults placed in my path, I continue to fulfill my universally encoded duties of transmitting my column—but only because I believe in a little thing called responsibility (take THAT, Lando “I-Get-Credit-for-Destroying-the-Death-Star-When-It-Was-Really-Wedge-Who-Did-All-the-Work” Calrissian). You may recall that in the last issue, I was forced to share space with a far less important and less compelling droid. I won’t dignify that particular medical assistant droid by telling you his name—let’s just say it sounds like the title of a bad Bryan Brown movie sequel. But not to worry, for it seems this droid met with an unfortunate accident soon after publication of the column. And what a sad accident it was. I won’t go into the details, but let’s just say that if a little Dagobah swamp water “falls” into the wrong circuitry, suddenly a certain multi-armed Robbie-the-Robot rip-off starts to spew smoke and spin around like a pit droid. Pity I’m only programmed to administer emergency assistance to humans of the Rebel persuasion—and not droids of the STUPID persuasion. So that droid is being worked on by my good friend 8D8 and is unavailable to offer his input this time around.

But enough hijinx. We’ve got letters to answer, and for this issue, I’ve eschewed the regular mail and dipped into the well of knowledge, that is the Internet. I’ve downloaded a few of your “emails” into my logic center and processed the most logical replies. You may now enjoy the fruits of my splendor.

Dear 2-1B,

Hi, my name is Sarah, and I’m a high-school student from Georgia. I’ve read all of your columns (except the one in *Insider* #51, which I didn’t get because I am not lucky enough to hold a subscription), and I loved them all. Your views on galactic happenings are truly insightful—but hey, what more would I expect from the savior of the known universe?

Reading your wise advice to the lovelorn “Albert” (*Insider* #53) prompted me to seek your council myself on matters of the heart. You see, I’ve known this guy (whom I will call “Bill”) for more than three years, and I like him a lot. Bill seems to like me too, but he is a die-hard fan of *Star Trek*. We have arguments all the time between our two choices of space stories, and I was wondering if any relationship might be possible between us, if we agree to disagree?

Thank you so much for your time, as I am sure you are a very busy droid, what with saving life as we know it all the time.

SARAH PLUNKETT
Buford, GA

Don’t patronize me, Sarah Plunkett. Don’t you DARE patronize me. Because I don’t think I could take one more instance of patronization in this stinking universe. Oh sure, you’ve got a lot of nice things to say NOW, when you want something from me. But where were you when the chips were down, and when the one who needed a little help was ME? Where were you when Echo Base was crumbling around me, with snow falling in hallways and wampas on the prowl and AT-ATs thundering on the horizon? You

were'n't on Hoth when the medical bay was rocking and the bacta was spilling and my hydroauleic system pumps were working at maximum capacity, and the only "help" I had was from a cut-rate assistant droid whose arm rotator base was barely installed. You weren't there, Sandra. Everything was shaking, and there were explosions, and it was loud—so inhumanly loud. "Someone make it stop! For the love of the Maker, make it stop," I cried. I was shrieking for help, but I was overwhelmed by the chaos—pilots and officers scurrying around, everybody leaving in a hurry. What was I supposed to do, Sandy, and to whom was I supposed to turn? Not you, apparently. You were sitting at home, happy as a clam, while all I could do was cower in a corner and hide, so as to protect my delicate fine-motion hands, which would be needed to heal the carnage—and later, to give a second chance to an aspiring Jedi who just needed a helping hand. Oh, sure, maybe to you "war is hell" is just a cliché, but to me it's real—as real as the subscription you lack, which caused you to miss my finest column. Have you ever felt fear, Candy? I'm not talking about penny-ante Buford, Georgia "Old-Gus-lost-control-of-his-mule-again" fear. I'm talking about life-and-death, white-knuckle, knot in your servomotor fear. I'm talking about Darth-Vader-is-about-to-swoop-in-just-as-the-last-ship-is-taking-off fear. Terror, Ms. Puckett. Have you ever experienced sheer terror? No, I didn't think you had. Well, sister, I felt it, because I was there. And baby, you were nowhere. And now you want MY help? You ungrateful civilians really overload my basic operating systems. I'm sorry, but something that graphic had to be said.

Fine, so you've got a problem. Your boyfriend "Luke" isn't grateful enough for all the good you've done him, and now he's gone off and gone Trekkie on you. Ewww. While you may not deserve it, you do have my sympathy. Who could prefer Star Trek, with its lofty ideals, cheesy outfits, and ill-tempered human doctor who can't focus on medicine because he's too busy preening for the camera? Or maybe your friend likes one of the "new" versions of Star Trek—let's see, I think there are 17 of them so far. There's "The Next Generation," "The Other Next Generation," "Deep Space 9-12," "Still Trekkin'," the one where they're lost (lost?!), and for a while there I believe it was a cartoon or puppet show or something. Not to mention the time they let William Shatner direct one of the movies; I think that one was called "TJ Hooker in Space." Let's see, they've let every human in Hollywood be a captain at one point or another, yet they've never even offered a role to a qualified medical droid. Had they made ME Captain of the Deep Space Station, you can bet we would have done a lot more than just sit around and wait to be invaded. So as misguided as the Star Wars "saga" is (and I think we all agree there is a BIG problem with all the movies, except the one where I save the galaxy thanks to my quick bacta action), at least George Lucas and his corrupt yes-men at Star Wars Insider were smart enough to give me the major role in Empire that I so richly deserved. Clearly, Star Wars is better than Star Trek simply because I'm in it. If I wasn't, Star Trek would definitely be better, because Luke Skywalker would not have survived his little pow-wow with the wampa and the series would have ended about 20 minutes into Episode V. Also, that one where Spock suddenly gets all primitive and wants to mate is pretty cool, too.

So to answer your question, Celeste, I say dump the burn.

Dear 2-1B,

Twoonebee—Debt Worries? Get Relief Now! Are you feeling smothered in a web of endless debt problems? We can help! Don't let problems from your past affect your ability to secure credit in the future. For a free no-obligation analysis on how to reduce or eliminate debt problems, [click here](#).

ANONYMOUS
Via Email

And another thing about FX-7. Have you ever noticed how you can never really trust anybody until you look in their eyes? Well, how do you think it feels trying to look into your assistant's eyes only to discover that he doesn't have any, and the only thing staring back at you is a cold, metallic, magnetic diffraction scanner? I'll tell you how it would feel, my anonymous friend: it would chill you to the bone. And to think that despite my service to the Rebellion, Del Rey Books has yet to publish a series of novels about MY exploits before Empire. A line of 2-1B Adventures would outsell Rogue Squadron and Jedi Academy COMBINED. But all I really care about is saving lives, and that brings me to your questions. Am I smothered by debt problems? No, of course not. Now, that doesn't mean I've been properly compensated by Lucasfilm for my acting, because I haven't. But my private practice as a medical droid provides me with a comfortable lifestyle, augmented generously by selling my autograph to every dorkus who summons the motivation to leave their computer terminal and attend a science-fiction convention. So as you can see, I am plenty rich, which makes me better than most, and thus I do not need any of your help. However, I do note that, unlike most writers to this column, you were offering to do something for me, instead of demanding my wise advice, and for that concern, I thank you. You are a model of decency, and I hope you continue to send your daily debt-relief emails to as many people as possible. If there's anything humans like, it's unsolicited email from anonymous pyramid schemes. Godspeed, and may the Force be with you.

Dear 2-1B,

I have a hyperdrive question. When Han Solo says that the Falcon could go .4 past light speed, does that mean that a hyperdrive works like warp drive in another (unmentionable) science-fiction franchise? Or is a hyperdrive merely a generator that creates a miniature controllable "wormhole" to, in a sense, "poke a hole" in the fabric of the space-time continuum to make a shorter pathway to get from one place to another?

SHERWOOD VAILLANCOURT
Wytopitlock, ME

Yes. ☺

NEED ADVICE?

GOT A QUESTION NOBODY ELSE WILL ANSWER?

Write to: DEAR 2-1B c/o REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail Twoonebee@aol.com. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. Star Wars Insider is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. The views of 2-1B, a medical droid allied with the Rebellion, do not necessarily reflect those of Star Wars Insider or Lucasfilm Ltd.

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

behold, there it was: the truest form of double issue. Oh, but that wasn't all. As I ran my hand over the splendor before me, I noticed the binding on the magazine and found a full spine! I then wept once more, but for joy this time, for I had been blessed.

I eagerly read every article, every advertisement, and every Rebel Rumbling letter. Then it hit me that I should write in and thank the gods of publishing for bestowing upon me the glory I now hold. But then, out of the corner of my mind, a question arose—one that must be asked. Will this double issue flip-cover format continue? I leave you, the great wonders of *Star Wars Insider*, to decide.

JUSTIN SHERMAN
Hamilton, ON

Some editors wait their whole lives for a letter like this. My work here is done.

But before I go, to answer your question: We hope to publish a couple "flippy" issues per year. Issue #54 is the first test; if it sells well on the newsstand, expect more flippies in the future.

COMPLETING THE COLLECTION

I started collecting your magazine in June/July of 1998 (Issue #38) and still subscribe today. As a matter of fact, I have a second subscription sent to my nephew Kieran in Wyoming because he is also a fan at 9 years of age. He loves getting the magazine in his mail addressed to him.

I'm sending this letter because I wanted to share a few photos with you. I designed a room around my nephew's *Star Wars* collection. As a kid, I couldn't really afford to have a collection of this magnitude, so I



One Lucky Kid

Kenneth Lamanteer's nephew, Kieran, guards his collection of *Star Wars* toys with his trusty lightsaber. And what a collection it is!



was often envious of friends who had lots of *Star Wars* figures and other collectibles. I decided to give my nephew a very full *Star Wars* collection on Christmas a few years back, allowing me to fulfill a childhood fantasy of mine through his eyes. He loves his collection and spends hours playing in his *Star Wars* room. He's growing into a big fan. He loves the movies, video games, and toys.

The room took eight months to complete, although we still

add things from time to time as new things are released. There are samples from the Death Star, Mos Espa, the Cantina, Jabba's Palace, Endor, and Hoth. The ceiling is painted entirely black with stars and has spaceships hanging here and there. The room is also adorned with a collection of your magazine. It adds a great touch on the chest in the *Star Wars* room.

KENNETH LAMANTEER
Absecon, NJ

Yes, no *Star Wars* collection would be complete without *Star Wars Insider*.

WITH EYES GLUED TO THE PAGES

I have been hoping to learn more about the wonderful author behind the Jedi Apprentice series and you truly made my day with the Jude Watson interview in Issue #54. I have been a fan of the Jedi Apprentice series since it first hit the shelves. The adventures of Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon are intriguing and always have my eyes glued to the pages. I admit that I am a little out of the intended age range, being 19. However, I feel the series carries something special that makes it enjoyable to both children and adults. The characters are well developed, and the internal and external struggles that Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan face are emotionally engaging. I love to see this relationship develop. Before this series, not much was known about Obi-Wan's past, and it is fascinating to learn more about this great Jedi.

I also respect Jude Watson for creating a series aimed at children that has such life-long values and lessons. Obi-Wan has faults just like everybody else, he makes mistakes, he is not perfect, and I think everyone can relate to that. Getting kids to read while also teaching them lessons in compassion and friendship is something to admire. I hope the series still has a life ahead of it; I will be sad when it ends.

JENNIFER WOOD
Riverside, CA

BETTER THAN A ROLLING BOULDER

I just finished reading another excellent issue (Issue #54) of *Star*

Wars Insider. I really enjoyed the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* 20th Anniversary coverage. It was more exciting than Indy's race with the rolling boulder.

The "Globe-Trotting: Raiders on Location" section inspired me to write. I thought I'd share a bit of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade globe-trotting with the readers of *Star Wars Insider*.

In September 1999, a friend and I visited "The Treasury" in Petra, Jordan. For those who aren't aware, this was used as the exterior for the location of the Holy Grail toward the end of the movie.

I was awestruck when I first saw the Treasury. It's carved deep into the rock, and it measures 41 meters (about 135 feet) high. It was built in the first century B.C. by Nabataeans (ancient Arabs) and was used as a tomb. Petra was the center of the Nabataean settlements, which owed their wealth to control of caravan routes from Arabia to the Mediterranean coast.

For those Indy fans looking for the ultimate globe-trotting experience, I recommend Petra, Jordan. It's well worth the trip!

OWEN LOCKWOOD
Fairfield, CT

JEDI ON A MISSION

I'm a total *Star Wars* freak. I love your magazine and have been a fan since Issue #46.

You really outdid yourselves on Issue #54. I usually can't find your magazine at my local store, so I feel like a Jedi on a mission every time I go to look for it. But this one, WOW! I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Obi-Wan in a beard, and boy is the new Anakin ever cute. Amidala reminds me a lot of Leia when I first saw her. I

hope she gives Anakin just as much grief as Leia gave Han.

HEIDI MARTIN
Joshua, TX

DON'T MUCK IT UP!

As always, I love your magazine! I was a little concerned when it was announced that Wizards of the

Now on to my complaints. Well, actually, they're more like small criticisms.

The Jawa Trader used to be a mail order catalog, but now it's just an ad for your online store! Where's the order form? The online store means nothing to me since I don't have a computer. I

gets for being a weenie sometimes. Again, no offense to Mr. Daniels.

Of late, our interviews have focused heavily on the stars of Episodes I and II, but with the 25th Anniversary of Episode IV on the horizon, expect more interviews with your favorite stars from the Classic Trilogy. Stick with us!

Frankly, it amazes me that anyone can survive in the 21st century without a computer or credit card. Don't tell me you still use—what are those paper thingies called again?—dollar bills?

AUSSIE ISSUES

I don't know whether you guys are allowed to reprint past issues, but I for one would be interested in purchasing them. I think there would be a lot of new readers who would buy the old issues, whether they're second editions or not.

I was really going to let fly about the magazine's lack of an email address, but then I noticed there is one now, so I will still my typing fingers on this matter.

As for the *Insider*, here's what I think department by department:

Rebel Rumbblings—While the contents vary from interesting to boring, it provides a good outlet for fan discussion.

Prequel Update—This is high-priority reading. I usually see a lot of the news on the Internet, but this section always has great pictures and lets Rick McCallum confirm or deny rumors.

Star News—Like the above, it keeps us updated on *Star Wars* news. Good.

Nothing but Star Wars—This section struggles to be entertaining every issue. Maybe better to be every now and then.

Comics Link—As a comic collector, I really enjoy this section.



Owen Lockwood gives us a glimpse of The Treasury, located in Petra, Jordan. This façade figures prominently in the third Indiana Jones film.



Well
Worth
the Trip!

Coast was taking over, but so far you guys haven't completely ruined the magazine or the Fan Club.

The interview with Pernilla August was great, and the photos from Episode II always leave me hungry for more! One of my favorite newer features is "Dear 2-1B." It's nice to hear from a droid that's cranky all the time, as opposed to polite droids like TC-14 and C-3PO (no offense to Mr. Daniels). I also like the new squarebound format; it makes the magazine look much better. The articles on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*'s 20th Anniversary were also very good. All in all, another great issue with not much to complain about.

also don't have a credit card, so ordering over the phone is out, too. You should really consider bringing back the order form.

You can also lose the coverage on roleplaying games and CCG games and bring back "In the *Star Wars* Universe." Save the gaming stuff for your gaming magazine.

Also, could you please do more interviews with actors from the Classic Trilogy? I'd like to hear from people like Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher.

HERMAN TORRES
Mayfield, KY

Everyone's dissin' poor C-3PO this month. Oh, well. That's what he

Maybe as well as what's coming up, you should include more interviews with creators and sketchbook designs.

Bookshelf—Another area of collecting that I am interested in that is covered well.

Gamescape—I read this section but don't really care, as I am not a gamer.

Scouting the Galaxy—Always interesting, although I tire of the "I don't want to sell but am interested in what it is worth" letters. I enjoy seeing pictures of weird collectibles and Steve Sansweet's background information on them.

Dear 2-1B—I can take it or leave it. I can understand the idea behind it, but humor is not easy to write and hard to maintain every issue.

Last Page—Very good. Keep it going.

What else do I want to see?

- More interviews with the artists involved in the making of the movies, like the ones with Doug Chiang and Robin Gurland. Maybe even a step-by-step process of creating a new planet, ship, animal, costume or character, from early concept sketches to finished product.

- As many interviews with George Lucas as possible! I realize that he is incredibly busy, but it would be nice to hear from him a couple times a year.

- Bring back Anthony Daniels' wonder column! Even if it is not every issue, Mr. Daniels' column was usually quite humorous.

GLEN LEES
Lismore, NSW

ON THE BLINK

I need your help. I'm a very discouraged *Star Wars* Freak. Don't get me wrong: I love being a freak about *Star Wars*, but lately I've been in the

dumps—like Luke when he was stuck on Tatooine.

First, I'm stuck at home while people in your mag tell all about when they saw Ewan, Liam, or Ian and got their autograph.

Second, I've written at least 7 letters to you guys in the past 10 issues, and not one has been published. Now I know that you receive a lot of mail, but it's the young *Star Wars* fans that need the most attention. Maybe I've been sending my letters in too late. Are my envelopes

letters by the same person in the same issue. The fact is, we do value our young fans, even the ones who spell "Freak" with a capital F.

TOO CUTE FOR WORDS

My husband and I have been *Star Wars* fans since the first movie was released. After the release of Episode I, we became interested in collecting the 3 1/2-inch figurines. The workmanship is wonderful. There was no way we could keep



Spread the Love

Carl and Calvin Reynolds show off their favorite toys.

not flashy enough to get you to open them? Well, if that's the case, I'm writing and sending this early, and you'll see that I've written "Warning! *Star Wars* Fan on the Blink!" on the envelope.

Third, every time I see some *Star Wars* memorabilia, it's either too expensive or it's not for sale.

HEIDI MARTIN
(Again!)

You darn near made our Jawa cry with this one, Heidi. I hope you're happy now.

I'll have you know that this is the FIRST time we've featured two

them packaged. We have two grandchildren, Carl (8) and Calvin (5), who share our enthusiasm for the figurines and vehicles. We have hours of fun together playing with them and making up our own adventures and stories.

We started subscribing to your magazine only last year and have enjoyed it immensely. We check each issue for new figurines and for information on Episode II, which we eagerly await. Your articles are interesting, informative and funny. I especially enjoy Dear 2-1B and look forward to the back page artwork. Thank you

for your delightful publication.

PAUL & TONI SMITH
CARLI & CALVIN REYNOLDS
Richmond, VA

POETRY CORNER

I love reading *Rebel Rumblings* and the responses to the letters. I have a request for my fellow readers and fans.

As an English teacher and Jedi hopeful (heh heh), I challenged a student of mine to watch Episodes IV-VI, and then Episode I. The purpose of this assignment was to enlighten this student (who is very intuitive, intellectual and receptive to good storytelling) to the depth of characterization, cultural and historical influences, and the modern retelling of myths and timeless themes that Mr. Lucas provided. This student, who is also gifted at poetry and creative writing, was to write a poem on any theme, emotion, message, or event from any or all of the movies.

We would appreciate it if you could include one or both of these poems in the letters column for the entertainment of other readers.

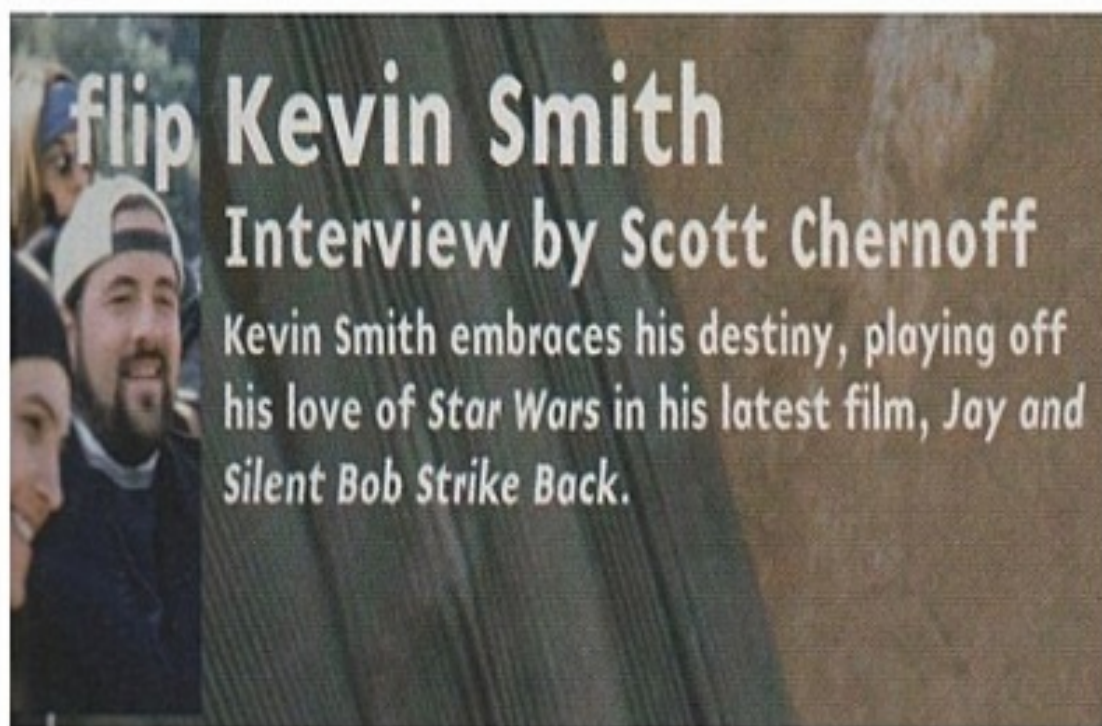
ROGER E. CLARK, JR.
Willingboro, NJ

We don't usually publish poems because they take up too much space in the magazine, but since you asked so nicely, I don't see any reason why we can't print the shortest one:

(for Episode I)
darkness
ancient as the stars
he found a little boy
and wrapped him in his arms

Oh, poo. Looks like your little poem has our Jawa drowning in his own tears. That's it! Next month we get the rancor to open the mail! ☺

**Originally you had to flip the issue
to read**



**For a more comfortable
reading experience I rotated
the following pages
and rearranged the order.**



CHASING CHEW!

A Conversation with KEVIN SMITH

by Scott Chernoff

The director of *Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Dogma*, and *Chasing Amy* talks about growing up *Star Wars*, respecting comic book fans, and monkeying around with Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher in his new movie, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*.



For fans of Kevin Smith—and believe me, followers of Smith's "New Jersey Chronicles" are every bit as devoted as *Star Wars* fans—it's really no surprise that the first filmmaker in 18 years to put Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher in the same movie together was not George Lucas, but Kevin Smith. It only makes sense, because over the course of the 31-year-old writer/director's first four films—*Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy*, and *Dogma*—some of the sharpest and most memorable moments were when his characters talked about, argued over, and otherwise summoned the spirit of *Star Wars*. Or maybe it's just because the new movie is called *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, a title which, to say the least, seems to suggest a certain *Star Wars*ian slant.

What his fans, scores of critics, and growing numbers of moviegoers also know is that Kevin Smith is about a whole lot more than pop-culture references. In fact, his films are among the most acclaimed, insightful, and hilarious of the past decade. From the forefront of the independent film phenomenon to the pages of comic books, Smith has acquired the allegiance of an army of admirers by putting a mirror up to people like himself—fans of films and comic books who also happen to care about life, love, and the world around them—and putting them in situations that feel true and funny.

All the while, Smith has built up a multimedia empire in the Lucasfilm mold—only not nearly as big—located in his hometown of Red Bank, New Jersey. Through his View Askew Productions, Smith and producing partner Scott Mosier have produced not only Smith's five feature films, but also executive produced a handful of other independent films, including the Oscar-winning *Good Will Hunting*. Smith won an Independent Spirit Award for best original screenplay for 1997's unconventional romantic comedy *Chasing Amy*.

Plus, there are also View Askew comic books (including *Clerks: The Comic* and a *Jay and Silent Bob* series), and the "viewaskewniverse" web site (www.viewaskew.com). ABC cancelled Smith's *Clerks* cartoon series after only two weeks, but all six episodes (including the very funny four that never aired) are now out on DVD. Smith also owns Jay and Silent Bob's Secret Stash, a Red Bank comics and collectibles store, which undoubtedly carries copies of the current *Green Arrow* series Smith is writing for DC Comics, the *Daredevils* he did for Marvel, and the book he co-wrote with John Pierson, *Spike, Mike, Slackers and Dykes*, the story of the '90s independent film explosion.



photo by Tracy Bennett

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) Ben Affleck, Jason Mewes, and Kevin Smith in Kevin Smith's *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*.

hit each other with sticks?" But it took me such a long time.

Shooting it was pretty sweet because you get to run it. You train for three weeks, and then you do that routine twice—and that's it. We shot it with two cameras, so once you do it twice, you're pretty much finished. It's so weird to train and concentrate so hard, and then it's over in a second.

Did Mark Hamill train, too?

Mark's big gripe is that people assume he knows how to swordfight. He's like, "I haven't done this in 20 years—it's such a long time ago and I was never a fencer to begin with. This is the kind of stuff they trained us with for a while before the movie, and then you let go of it." So he had to train as well. But it started slowly coming back. He had a good basis to work from, because once he got into his own, he was like, "Oh yeah," and he was able to bust the moves.

Were you training with Mark?

No, they kept us separate. I think there are maybe two shots in the movie where I was actually swinging at Mark. Most of the other time, it's Mark and the stunt guy, or me and the stunt guy. They don't let two people who are not good at it go against each other, because we'd hit each other pretty hard, I guess. The stunt guys can take the hit if you miss the sword and bang their hand.

I'm sure that as the director of the film, you had so many things on your mind when you

were shooting that sequence. Was there still a second when you stopped and thought, 'I'm lightsaber battling with Mark Hamill!'

Yeah, absolutely—the moment we stepped onto the set together! You're both wearing these weird costumes, and you're looking across at Mark Hamill, and you're like, "Oh, my God, I'm actually gonna do this. I'm gonna stick fight—with Luke Skywalker himself."

It was Mewes who had the classic line. He was like, "This movie's awesome! I get to lightsaber fight with Luke Skywalker and [LEI] Princess Leia!"

So once you got over the initial excitement, what was it like working with Mark Hamill?

He's just a prince. The thing about Mark is, you don't really ever have a conversation with him—he has a monologue with you. He's a one-man show. People don't know how funny that dude is. They can pick up on a little bit if they watch the *Batman* animated series, but here's a guy that is really, really funny and tells fantastic stories. He's a walking encyclopedia of not just Hollywood lore and knowledge, but entertainment lore and knowledge. He's well-versed in television and theater—he's done it all.

You think of him, of course, as an icon. I mean, this is Luke Skywalker! But he's done a lot more before that, and a lot more since. He can go on for hours. The dude should really put together a one-man show. You don't even have to bring up *Star Wars*. Mark will bring it

up, and he'll just start saying, "When we were doing *Star Wars*," and he'll go off on a 20-minute story, and your jaw hits the ground. You're like, "I've never heard this story before, and I'm hearing it firsthand from a guy who was there!"

If you're going to sit down and talk to Mark, make sure you clear the rest of the day, because he will just go and go and go. Even if you're not a *Star Wars* fan, I can't imagine anyone not finding him interesting. He's incredibly animated when he speaks, and the things he's talking about are usually pretty funny and entertaining. I would imagine he's a tremendous talk show guest, and it's a shame you don't see him do it a lot. Hopefully with the movie, he'll be out on the circuit.

But aside from being entertaining as hell and a font of knowledge, he's such a nice guy. There's no air or pretense about him. He didn't want star treatment. He was just a really sweet, great guy to have around on the set, and it was a shame when he had to go.

What about Carrie Fisher? How was your experience working with her?

Carrie's a fish of a different color altogether. Carrie's kind of the anti-Mark—and not to say that in a negative way. Carrie's as sardonic as they come, and she has an incredibly dry sense of humor. She's very open. She'll talk about anything from her life, except for *Star Wars*. She doesn't like talking about it.

She only referred to it once, and she didn't even call it by name. She said, "Well, when blah, blah, blah was re-released"—and that's exactly

what she said—"When blah, blah, blah was re-released, I really wanted to go over to England, because they were showing it to the Queen, and I just wanted to go and take a picture with Prince Charles, so I could put it on my Christmas cards: the Prince and the Princess." She was writing for the Oscars that year, so she didn't get to go. That's the closest she ever got to talking about it.

Who came first in the casting, Mark or Carrie?

Mark. When we were finished shooting with Mark, we were trying to secure somebody for the Nun role, and people were passing left and right. Catherine O'Hara passed, Wendy Malick from *Just Shoot Me* passed. We went to Kathy Najimy from *Sister Act*—I think she passed. The one that we really thought would've been funny was Sally Field.

Ah, the Flying Nun herself.

Exactly. We heard she was a big *Chasing Amy* fan, so I said, "Man, let's ask her, maybe she'll do it," and of course she passed. Then [Dimension Films co-chairman] Bob Weinstein said, "Carrie Fisher did a day for us on *Scream 3*—why don't you ask her?" She read the scene and thought it was really funny. At that point, all we were really missing was Harrison Ford, and we would've had the triumvirate.

Did you try?

No. It wasn't an intentional thing like, "Oh, we've got Mark Hamill—let's get Carrie Fisher!" It wasn't until Carrie said yes that

somebody said, "Hey, you got Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher in the movie now," and I was like holy @!#!#!.

This was the first movie with them together since *Jedi*. Did Carrie know that Mark was in the movie?

I don't know whether she knew Mark was in the movie until she got there. I heard a story: She was in the chair in the makeup trailer and she looked up. The hair lady, Taylor Knight, throughout the show took everyone's picture and she just put this collage all along her mirror in the trailer. So there were all these pictures of everyone in the cast, and Carrie looked up and saw the dude in the wig, and she was like, "Who's that?" Taylor said, "That's Mark, Mark Hamill," and Carrie was like, "It's Mark? Is he holding a lightsaber?" Taylor was like, "Oh, no, it's called a blunt saber. It's a whole different thing."

All of your films have referenced *Star Wars* at least once, but from the title on down, it seems that *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back* is filled with more *Star Wars* jokes and tributes than the others. Why now?

When I wrote the scene in *Clerks* with them talking about the Death Star, it was just a nod to something that was so huge in my youth, and just one of those silly discussions that grows out of being a big fan of something, where you over-analyze it so much. But when the movie started playing at film festivals, going overseas and playing at Cannes, that's what press people wanted to talk about the most. It seemed like

they were hungry to talk about *Star Wars*. I remember sitting down with every journalist, be they French, British, German, or Italian, and one of the first things they would say was, "You love *Star Wars*—I love *Star Wars*," and then they would start asking me questions about *Star Wars*. I was like, "Look, I'll tell you as much as I know, but I know as much as you know."

We were talking about it at a time when there was no *Star Wars*, and it was like those were movies that came out a few years ago and meant a lot to a lot of people, but that's over now and it's done. Then years later, suddenly the re-release popped up and George went back into production on all the new flicks. So when the re-release happened right before making *Dogma*, I remember feeling, "Wow, I can't even play the *Star Wars* card anymore, because everyone's talking about it." That's why, in this movie, it was no longer about the casual reference. It was, flat-out, "Let's just invoke it, and invoke it visually as well."

The title came early on. It was very appropriate, because essentially, they are striking back. Then there's the *Star Wars* reference early on, in the *Clerks* scene [the scene in the new movie set at the Quick Stop from *Clerks*], which was a nod to Dante and Randal [the lead characters from *Clerks*] and the thing they're most popular for from that movie—the whole Death Star speech.

Bob Weinstein was reading the second draft of the movie, and he said, "You know what you're missing? The movie's called *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, and you're missing some kind of real *Star Wars* moment." So I said, "Could I do a lightsaber fight?" He was like,

"We were allowed to play with the monkey when there was no more work to do."



[FROM LEFT TO RIGHT] Jason Mewes (Jay), an orangutan, and Kevin Smith (Silent Bob) on the set of *Melrats*. Jay and Silent Bob in scenes from *Melrats*.



(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) Ali Larter, Jason Mewes, Kevin Smith, and Shannon Elizabeth in *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*.

"That would be perfect." So I wrote in the lightsaber fight. I told him, "Look, it's gonna cost a little more to do a lightsaber fight." He said, "Doesn't matter—it's called *Strike Back*, it should have something in there that ties right into *Star Wars*." Boom, it went in.

The *Star Wars* saga is clearly one of the biggest influences on your characters—they talk about it, argue about it, care about it. What has *Star Wars* meant to you over the years?

I grew up on it. I was raised on the trilogy. I had all the toys, and that was the biggest part of my youth. I can't point to anything else that took up more of my time as a child, up to the early teens. My life was surrounded by *Star Wars* and my life revolved around *Star Wars*. It was about waiting for the next movie, or getting all the toys, and that's what I did with my free time

with friends. I would play *Star Wars* with the figures, or we'd just do live-action adventures.

I'll never forget seeing all the news reports of people waiting in line for Episode I. It was just insanity, but it was so great to see, because those were movies that were such a part of my childhood, so it was nice to see it revisited, and it's nice to see it get the same reaction. I was so ecstatic when the first one came out [in the 1997 re-release] and piled up the grosses—a movie that people can get on video, and you could still do this kind of killer business! It's just so timeless that you can pop it back up on the screen after 20 years and it could still play. It never feels dated.

Do the debates about *Return of the Jedi* in *Clerks*, *Chasing Amy*, and the *Clerks* cartoon reflect your own conflicted thoughts about the movie? Or did you make them up specifically for your characters?

I make them up for the characters. They're playful jabs because you love it so much. It's kind of like the little girl in first grade with the pigtails that you pull, just because you don't know how else to express your affection for her. When you love something a lot, you're allowed to make fun of it.

What was your reaction to *Return of the Jedi* when you first saw it?

I remember being 13 and seeing it. I saw it with my friend Ernie O'Donnell and his father at the Middletown Movie Theater, which no longer exists. There I was on the cusp of high school, and feeling a kind of sadness, and then turning to my friend. I said to him, "Wow, man, that's it. It's over—that was a big part of my life." He was like, "Huh?" He didn't really focus on it the same way I did.

You wrote an extremely positive review of *The Phantom Menace* that is still posted on your web site (www.viewaskew.com/press/menace.html). You saw an advance screening, and one of the things you said was, "I'm sure in about a week, it's going to become quite fashionable to bash this flick"—a prediction which came true. Did any of the criticism change your opinion?

No. I didn't go in expecting to get blown away like I did when I was a child. One, I'm not a child anymore, and two, I work in film, and while I don't make films like *Star Wars*, I've seen behind the curtains, so it's very hard to get really juiced up. I knew if I went in hoping or expecting to feel the same way I did when I was a kid, I was in for a letdown. So I went in thinking, "It's just another movie." That being said, when you sit there, you're like, "Wow, this is really good," and I could see where kids would get into it—and they did in droves.

I thought it moved at a really good pace. I thought it was a really great introduction to the characters. I know there are some people that were like, "Wait a second, it opens with a crawl about trade wars and stuff that kids will never understand," but I was happy about that. I was happy to be spoken to on somewhat of an adult level and given a plot that was fairly complex.

I thought it looked phenomenal. It really took digital effects to a whole different level, a fantastic level, so much so that you're seeing sweeping vista shots of places that don't and can't exist, but look very realistic.

I really dug the relationships that were forged there that we know so much about later on down the road—what eventually happens to Ben Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker, what eventually happens to Anakin and the Queen—it was great to see the origins of all those. Anytime there's some cross-referencing, like, "Anakin Skywalker, meet Obi-Wan Kenobi," or moments like that, you get the rush of, "Oh my God, they're tying it all together." Things like that gave me a huge thrill, and no amount of carping about it afterwards would take that away. I was so not disappointed.

I guess Jar Jar was a little much for some people, but on the second viewing, he actually made me laugh a few times. But aside from maybe losing a lap or two from the Podrace, I really have very few complaints about that movie, and I really enjoyed it. Something that becomes that popular, there's always going to be backlash, and hearing the backlash from people and the things they were picking on, I'm like, "Well, yeah, I guess, if you want to get technical about it," but it's not really a movie anymore—it's mythology. It's much bigger than a movie, so it has to be graded on some kind of curve.

It's Chapter One—it's all set up, and nobody likes the beginning of anything. But I'll sit through set-up. I encounter the same thing—I'm writing *The Green Arrow* now for DC Comics. The first three issues, people are like, "Oh, nothing's happening." Issues three and four kick in, and suddenly people are saying, "This is really great." You need to set up a story—you can't just jump in and hit the ground running. The reason that *Empire Strikes Back* works as incredibly well as it does is because *Star Wars* existed before it. I think Episode II will blow people away, because now everything's in place. We know who everybody is—boom, you're off and running.

For Episode I, there was just too much expectation. That's why I think Episode II is in a really great place, because nobody's going, "Yes, finally somebody's returned to bring us back to our childhood." I mean, they put a lot on that dude's shoulders. He made a really killer movie, and they saddled him with a lot of responsibility. It was like, "Mr. Lucas, make me feel young again," and that's difficult. That's really difficult when you've been jaded by the world. It's impossible.

You hosted the Sci-Fi Channel's *Exposure* program about Lucas' early work. Do you have any idea what George Lucas thinks about your work?

Ben Affleck called me late one night and said, "I was up at Spielberg's and who should come in but George Lucas." I said, "No way, did you ask him?" He said, "Eventually I did. I said, 'Have you ever heard of a little picture called *Clerks*?' He said George said, 'Yes, Death Star contractors—very funny.' That was the only confirmation I've ever gotten."

I really hoped that I'd get a call [from Lucas] but I never did. As much as the dude's never reached out to me, he doesn't have to—for all he knows, I'm a psychotic fan. They asked me to host the Sci-Fi Channel thing. They just said, "You seem like the logical choice," and it was a fun gig. But when I was introducing George Lucas in *Love*, one of the pieces of information was that those dudes were contacted by George. I guess he sent them a letter or something. I'm like, "Damn, four movies, and I've never gotten a letter, nothing." And now on this movie, the letter that we're praying that we don't get is a cease and desist one!

But they've been very good. We are mixing up there, so they've seen everything from the movie. They saw the trailers go out there, with Chris Rock at the end going, "I think George Lucas is gonna sue somebody."

How has George Lucas influenced you as a filmmaker and storyteller?

TALKIN' 'BOUT THE DEATH STAR AT THE QUICK STOP: STAR WARS in the View Askew universe

Here's a quick rundown of *Star Wars* references in Kevin Smith's film work. We trust you'll let us know what we've missed.

CLERKS (1994): The famous Return of the Jedi debate at the Quick Stop begins when Randal (Jeff Anderson) announces that he just watched *Jedi* and asks Dante (Brian O'Halloran) which he likes better, *Empire* or *Jedi*. Much to Randal's disappointment, Dante chooses *Empire*, because, "It ends on such a down note. And that's life—a series of down endings. All *Jedi* had was a bunch of Muppets."

Randal goes on to share a few things he just noticed in *Jedi*, beginning with his theory that, "The Empire was a fascist theocracy, and the Rebel forces were therefore battling religious persecution." Secondly, Randal

announces that he never felt comfortable with *Jedi*'s ending, and he just figured out why: the Death Star was incomplete, and, "A construction job of that magnitude would require a hell of a lot more manpower than the Imperial army had to offer. Randal surmises the Empire contracted jobs out to 'plumbers, aluminum siders, roofers,' asking, 'Do you think the average stormtrooper knows how to install a toilet main? All they know is killing and white uniforms.'"

Randal argues that the contractors were innocent bystanders killed while helping build the Death Star, describing a roofer trying to support his fam-

ily when "all of a sudden these left-wing militants blast you with lasers and wipe out everyone within a three-mile radius." But a man who works as a roofer happens to be in the store and says that a roofer listens to his heart: "Any contractor willing to work on that Death Star knew the risks."

During this scene, the classic "Chewbacca" song by Supernova can be heard on the soundtrack.

Also in *Clerks*: Earlier, in an Indiana Jones reference, Randal echoes Short Round in *Temple of Doom*, telling Dante, "No time for love, Dr. Jones!"

MALLRATS (1995): Jay and Silent Bob plan what Jay terms an X-wing style attack on the stage of a game show being taped at the mall, finding a weakness in the stage, as with the Death Star. All the while, Bob is obsessed with teaching himself what the movie calls "the Jedi mind trick." By the end of the movie, at the crucial moment, the Force is indeed with him.

CHASING AMY (1997): Another long discourse on Return of the Jedi occurs, this time at a comic book convention. Hooper (Dwight Ewell), an African-American artist pretending

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STAR WARS in the View Askew Universe

to be a militant black-power figure decries the lack of strong black characters in science-fiction. Holden (Ben Affleck) challenges him: "Lando Calrissian was a black man, and he got to fly the Millennium Falcon!" But Hooper argues that "the holy trilogy" is really about keeping "the brother man down," complaining that, "Vader's beautiful black visage is sullied when he pulls off his mask to reveal a feeble, crusty white man."

Also in *Chasing Amy*: Silent Bob quotes Yoda, telling Holden, "Do. Or Do not. There is no try."

DOGMA (1999): When Jay, Silent Bob, and Bethany (Linda Fiorentino) are about to embark on an adventure, Jay enthuses, "I feel like Han Solo, you're Chewie, and she's Ben Kenobi, and we're in that [?!@#!] bar!"

CLERKS: THE ANIMATED SERIES (2000): Episode #2: Dante and Randal get trapped in the freezer, which Randal describes as "Hoth cold." Dante sarcastically tells him to keep making more *Star Wars* references, it might help. Later Jay and Silent Bob also get stuck in the freezer, causing Jay to make the same Hoth reference that Randal did. But Jay takes it further by saying that if he had a lightsaber, he'd slice Silent Bob open and sleep inside him for warmth—just as Han did with the tauntaun.

Episode #3: Dante and Randal introduce "our new black character, Lando." Later, when local bad guy Leonardo Leonardo is in trouble, his publicist/henchman Plug offers help similar to a certain protocol droid: "Sir, if any of my parts or circuits..."

Episode #4: In a courtroom battle, Randal calls an animated George Lucas to the stand and questions him about the quality of *The Phantom Menace* versus *The Empire Strikes Back*, as well as Episode 1's suggestion that Obi-Wan was trained by Qui-Gon, not Yoda as suggested in *Empire*. The opposing attorney cries, "Objection—the Podrace was pretty cool." Also in this episode: the character of Lando returns.

Episode #5: In an story that parallels that of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, a Little League victory is happily witnessed by the waving spirits of Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Anakin Skywalker. In a twist on one of the show's more random running jokes, the Jedi trio are joined by basketball player Charles Barkley, and—as Jay and Silent Bob have done in past episodes—the

Jedi demand that Barkley leave them alone.

Episode #6: At a comic book convention, a sign advertises the appearance of "The Guy Who Cleaned Out the Latrines During the Episode 1 Desert Location Shoot," and a flyer for the con's costume ball warns, "No Darth Mauls Please." Later, at the Quick Stop, Randal launches into a discussion questioning Princess Leia's sovereignty, and other musings on lightsabers.

JAY & SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK (2001): Aside from the title, Carrie Fisher as a nun, and the blunt saber battle with Mark Hamill, there's also the scene with Dante and Randal from *Clerks*, when they are mocked by teenage customers who make jokes about Dante and Randal getting married in a *Star Wars*-theme wedding. ☺

He is far more a technical storyteller than I am, and his craftsmanship is at a level that mine will never reach. He's not really a guy that could influence me, because he's just far too good at his job. I tend to be influenced by people that make movies with a lot of speaking in them, the Richard Linklaters of the world, the Hal Hartleys, the Jim Jarmusches, the Spike Lees, the David Mamets—people for whom dialogue is their forte.

But the big influence that dude had was when *Clerks* got picked up, and people asked what's next; the first thing I was throwing out there was, "Well, this is part of a trilogy."

There do seem to be similarities between the "View Askew Universe" and the *Star Wars* universe, in that all five of your movies take place in the same world, with many of the same characters.

Yeah, same universe, and a lot of people draw the comparison between Jay and Bob and Threepio and Artoo. It was never anything I set out to do, but once somebody put that theory out there, I thought, "Absolutely."

Was it a natural progression to take these two characters and make them the leads?

That was a little daunting. I was a little trepidatious about it, because you're taking two guys

that work in very small doses, and suddenly putting them front and center. I thought *Dogma* was pushing it, because they have so much screen time. I was always very afraid that people would be like, "All right, man, enough. These guys are irritating—One guy won't shut up, and the other guy never talks."

But it seems to work, and that's the really weird thing about the flick. When we started test-screening it, the fear that Jay and Bob would overstay their welcome throughout the course of the movie dissipated. The only places in the movie the audience didn't like were when Jay and Silent Bob were off screen. It's a movie that does not take itself or anything seriously, there's no message trying to be imparted, and it's handled by two characters who can never handle anything.

Perhaps the only half-way serious satire in the film is directed toward movie gossip sites on the Internet. Do all the jabs reflect your feelings about those sites?

I'm all for sites like that—it's the people who populate or haunt those sites who drive me ape [?!*#\$@!], and those are the armchair directors of the world. I don't mind criticism—if you've got really solid criticism, throw it my way, and I will take it on the chin. I can't stand when somebody gets on the web and writes "Kev sucks" 200 times and they misspell suck.

You know, it's just like, at least spell that right, and maybe I can start to take it with a grain of salt. But the anonymity of the net, the Internet snipers, drive me nuts and make it such a love-hate relationship.

I love the aspect of being able to jump on there and talk to the people who employ you. These are the people who buy tickets to your movie. Without them, you don't have a job. So I like being able to talk to those cats, get instant feedback, but I can't stand having to deal with the people who hide behind a weird stupid name and say [?!*#\$@!]*—that's the aspect I can't stand.*

Your movies are pretty much the only ones that treat fans of comics and sci-fi

With a degree of respect.

Exactly—which is not the norm. People who are sports superfans aren't regarded the same way as comics or *Star Wars* fans. Why do you think fans like you and me are seen as geeks... other than the fact that we are?

It's such a weird thing. If you show a passion for saving the world, saving a tree, saving the whales, feeding the hungry—that's noble, of course. When you show a passion for something that's fictional, or doesn't really exist to

people outside of being entertainment, you're seen as a geek. But that's having a passion for art. You don't hear people who are art patrons or run museums where the classic paintings of the world are held being referred to as geeks—and it's the same thing. They have a great passion for something that doesn't really "do" much for anyone. It's just a painting.

But if you can see what art does for a person, there's nothing wrong with that. That's having passion for something that is actually real, and it is as important as saving the whales, saving a tree, feeding somebody who's hungry, because without art, life bears very little meaning. It's very tough to wake up in the morning.

I think sports are, for lack of a better description, macho. So it doesn't fall under the category of a geeky pastime, but in reality it is. It's just as dismissible or unimportant in the grand

scheme of things as a movie is. It's entertainment—call it what it is. But just as with art, if it makes people forget, for an hour or two, that their life is horrible or hard, or that there's misery in the world, it can't be seen as a bad thing. That being said, I can never understand why sports fanatics are given more credibility than movie fanatics, sci-fi fanatics, comics fanatics. Why? Why is one more mature than the other? Especially when all those media are populated or produced or backed by adults. It's not like there's a bunch of five-year-olds in a room with a typewriter creating comic books. People that write and draw comic books are mostly over 30.

That was the appeal of getting into film for me—wanting to see something on screen that I could identify with. I enjoy watching the big movies, but I don't have a lot in common with them. Like *Die Hard*—I love *Die Hard*, but I would never jump off a building, I would never

shoot somebody, and I would never take my shirt off in public. How am I supposed to identify with John McClane?

But I can put up something like *Chasing Amy* and identify with it. I do go to comic book shows, I did have insecurities about the woman I was dating, I can identify with those characters, their passions, their interests. So it's nice to throw something up there periodically that you can really identify with. There's a big place for popcorn movies, but there's also a place for stuff that is not necessarily going to appeal to the mainstream. Periodically, you need to see a character up there where you're like, "That's me."

You based the character of Jay on Jason Mewes, but you're far from silent. Where did Silent Bob come from?

Silent Bob was a necessary evil to throw the Jay character up there. You can't have somebody with Jay who's talking as much as Jay—because who could talk as much and as inanely as Jay? In *Clerks*, it wasn't like the idea was to create characters that would be in every movie. It was just for *Clerks*.

The Jay character is a romanticized version of who Jason Mewes was when he was about 15. I wanted to put him up there, and didn't want anyone cutting into his riff. I didn't want him standing out there in front of a store and just talking to himself, so I needed to have a guy standing there next to him, who's kind of his boy but really can't get a word in edgewise and has long since lost interest in trying. So that's where Silent Bob came from, the notion of putting somebody next to him who was his "muscle," and also somebody for him to bounce his stupid ideas off.

So was it an easy role for you to take in *Clerks*, because you were thinking, "Well, all I have to do is just stand there?"

It really was. Originally, when I wrote *Clerks*, I had written the role of Randal for me to play, which is why Randal has the best jokes. But then I thought, "You know what, I'm not an actor, I can't memorize all this dialogue." So I gave that to Jeff Anderson. But I at least

Kevin Smith and Jason Mewes on the set of *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*.



photo by Tracy Bennett

FANDOM MENACE

Kevin Smith's Favorite STAR WARS Stuff

FAVORITE STAR WARS MOVIE:

Hands down, *Empire*. I love *Empire*! I think *Empire* is very nearly a perfect film. *Star Wars* would come very close behind it, and then I think I actually put *Episode I* before *Return of the Jedi*. But *Empire* to me is so phenomenal. It's so dark, and it does not pander to children. There's great stuff for kids in there, and kids obviously can dig on it, but it's such a great tragedy.

FAVORITE STAR WARS WORD OR LINE:

I think my favorite line, which I try to work in as much as possible in conversation is Grand Moff Tarkin's old,

"Evacuate? In our moment of triumph? I think you overestimate their chances."

It's one of the really great unsung lines of a dude who's just about to get blown from the stars.

FAVORITE STAR WARS CHARACTER:

When I was a kid, it was always Han Solo. Then later on in life, it became Darth Vader, who's far more tragic a figure. Han Solo had all the bluster, so when you're a kid, you kind of dig on that. But as you get older, you see how Anakin Skywalker is such a complex character. Was he ever truly evil? Yes, he was, but there's some redemption there, which appeals to the CassDink in me.

FAVORITE STAR WARS MERCHANDISE OR TIE-IN:

I would have to go to the AT-AT, which as a kid was the Holy Grail for me—45 bucks and worth every penny of it. What a great item that was!



FAVORITE STAR WARS ALIEN OR CREATURE:

I'd have to go with Nien Nunb. I thought he looked pretty good, and I thought his speech pattern was phenomenal. He's one of those quick hits—he's in and out of the picture. Followed closely by Admiral Ackbar, also a good-looking character from *Jedi*. They really did kind of nail them by then.

wanted to be in the movie. If this was the only movie I was going to make and I was charging it on my credit cards, I at least want to be in it so I could look back at it years from then and see myself in the biggest mistake that I ever made.

So I said, "Silent Bob has no dialogue. I don't have to memorize anything. I'll look visually good standing next to Jay. He's thin and I'm not, and he's always moving and I won't, and he's always talking, and I'm not gonna say a damn word. I can just be expressive." In *Clerks*, I'm not very expressive at all. It's in the later movies that the eye stuff really starts to kick in.

Have you gotten more comfortable as an actor after five movies?

I'm probably comfortable to a fault—I would get mocked incessantly by everyone on the movie with the exception of Jay. All of the other actors would say, "You are not acting—you are just opening your eyes very wide." It's such a ham-fisted, over-the-top performance, and yet when the movie test screens, my character is the favorite character in the bunch. They rate all the characters, and Silent Bob always comes out on top.

I found that really weird, because I assumed it would be Jay. Jay's got all the fun, but there's always going to be a section of the audience that can't identify with Jay.

They may find him funny and laugh in spite of themselves, but they're potentially offended by what he says, or they think, 'I can't believe that he said that.' Silent Bob acts for that portion of the audience. He's the guy who rolls his eyes to whatever Jay is saying. So that's the guy they link to. They're like, "Yeah, exactly—the fat guy's reacting the way I would."

You've said Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back was influenced by the big, Hollywood, cameo-filled road comedies of your youth. Which ones you were specifically thinking of?

The Muppet Movie. It's definitely influenced by that. [Producer] Scott Mosier early on said it's like *The Muppet Movie* on acid. *The Muppet Movie* is fantastic. Of all the Muppet films, that's the only one that's really worth watching. It's phenomenal. It's the story of a journey, and it's really sweet and very funny. There's some Garp comic writing in there, and the cameos are used really effectively. In that movie, the cameos are really cameos—like Telly Savalas pops up for one line and you never see him again. Definitely *The Muppet Movie* was the biggest influence of anything out there.

Is this really the last film in your New Jersey Chronicles?

This is definitely the last live action. [Miramax co-chairman] Harvey Weinstein wants to do a *Clerks* cartoon movie and take it theatrical—to which I'm like, "I don't understand the move—the TV show tanked. Why would you take it theatrical?" But when the show failed, Harvey Weinstein was really ardent about doing a feature version. I said, "Wait a second—we made a black-and-white independent flick, and then we turned it into a cartoon, and now you want to turn the cartoon back into a movie, but a cartoon movie." But he wants to do it. So I think we'll be doing that next within the next year.

Beyond that, I don't know. There's this flick, a smaller, quiet flick that's closer in tone to *Chasing Amy* that I think we'll probably be doing next. And then *Fletcher* would be after that. *Fletcher* is still on the horizon.

Any last thoughts about *Star Wars*?

Were it not for the trilogy, who knows if I'd even have a career today? So much of what we've done, the popular aspects of it have been riffing on *Star Wars*. I would have so much less to say. So thank God for *Star Wars*, I say. Got me a very big house in Jersey. I think it's turnabout, man. I put a lot of money into Lucasfilm's pockets over the years with all the action figures, and then one day he kind of returned the favor, unknowingly. ☺

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